

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Thekla: Text and Context

with a First English Translation of the *Miracles*

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF GREEK AND ROMAN STUDIES

CALGARY, ALBERTA

AUGUST, 2011

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Abstract

During the reign of Claudius, in the eastern frontier region of the Roman Empire, a young Iconian woman named Thekla embraced the message of Christ as proclaimed by St. Paul, rejected traditional values and, after escaping martyrdom, embarked upon a life of compassionate service for others at *Seleucia ad Calycadnum* (present day Silifke, Turkey) and its environs. She took up residence a short distance from the city where consequently, a religious community developed at her sacred precinct. The site, known as Hagia Thekla, was a flourishing religious center and popular pilgrimage destination through the seventh century. After her life, Thekla was honored as a sainted miracle worker. Her story, as recorded in various texts including the *Miracles of Thekla*, has fired the imagination of the Christian Church almost from its inception.

This thesis provides the first English translation of the *Miracles* in their entirety which serves as an integral part of this dissertation the purpose of which is: 1) to situate Thekla in regard to her time and place in the development of the the early Church; 2) to address Thekla's significance for her devotees and other later Christians in terms of identity and self-actualization as evinced by text, site, and cult; and 3) to establish a touchpoint for future study that is consonant with the historical and textual record.

This study also provides a translation of the *Myrtle Wood*, challenges long-standing notions in regard to Thekla and the *Miracles*, argues for Thekla's historicity, introduces the significance of Queen Tryphaena, provides criteria for determining biblical reference, examines the legitimacy of Thekla's characterization as a proto-feminist, raises new questions, revisits early scholarship on Thekla, introduces supporting evidence from the historical record, incorporates Spanish scholarship on incubation and miracle

collections, delineates Thekla's territory, and considers the meaning and significance of lexical items for interpretation of the evidence. A careful reading of the *Miracles* provides a deeper understanding of Thekla and opens a window onto early Eastern Christianity, its festivals, the practice of incubation, and faith healing. Ultimately, this study speaks to the interstices of narrative, history, faith, and identity.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the generous support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) in completing this dissertation. I am thankful for the support of the University of Calgary, Faculty of Graduate Studies, and Department of Greek and Roman Studies in the form of grants that allowed me to attend international conferences as well as spend time with Dr. Bruce Zuckerman at the West Semitic Research Project learning how to work with inscriptions, opportunities that helped to shape my scholarship. I especially appreciate Dr. Adrienne Kertzer, who as Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, graciously granted me the necessary time to attend to other pressing responsibilities while still pursuing my doctoral degree.

Above all others, my heartfelt thanks goes to Dr. Haijo Westra, without whom this dissertation simply would not have been possible. Dr. Westra's calm guidance and boundless patience combined with his extensive knowledge, insights, and commitment to excellence are amazing (*θαυμαστά*). I cannot imagine a better supervisor. My life has been enriched and blessed by him on both a professional and personal level.

I would like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Hanne Sigismund Nielsen and Dr. John Humphrey, for their support, thoughtful comments, and direction. I am thankful for the members of the Department of Greek and Roman Studies including Dr. Martin Cropp and Prof. Jim Hume, who have been exceptionally supportive, and Dr. John Vanderspoel who first introduced me to Late Antiquity. Finally, my thanks to my two external examiners, Dr. Robert Cousland and Dr. Francine Michaud whose insightful comments and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

Dr. Catherine Clark Kroeger, who continually brought to my attention primary and secondary information about Thekla and provided me a platform from which to share Thekla with others, was an invaluable support in the preparation of this dissertation. Dr. Elizabeth Bryson Bongie deserves many thanks for her assistance in my translation of the *Miracles* and for providing me with a provisional translation of the *Life of Thekla* which I have used throughout.

My thanks also goes to Dr. Arda Harms for her assistance with Turkish articles, Jim Hume for his help with Italian ones, and my daughters, Bethany and Larissa, respectively, for their help with Spanish and German articles and many technical aspects of my research. An extra thanks to Larissa for her insightful observations and analysis of the “unintentional” information imbedded in the text and to Bethany for implementing such a creative way to teach me Spanish in so small an amount of time. My work is all the better for them. In the early stages of my research, Dr. Hugh Elton provided helpful comments in regard to the Isaurians and Dr. Jan Willem Drijvers helped chart direction and provided encouragement. I extend a special thank you to Dr. Hansgerd Hellenkemper for his enthusiastic and most helpful insights from his archaeological survey of Hagia Thekla. And last but not least, I should like to thank Dr. Alison Jeppesen-Wigelsworth who stepped in at the eleventh hour, sacrificing her own projects to assist me with ever so many details. I am ever grateful for her suggestions, expertise, and encouragement. While my desire in this work has been for accuracy, there will surely be inaccuracies – these are my own alone and not a reflection upon any of those who have assisted me.

Finally, I wish to thank family and friends who cheered me on each step of the way especially my dear mother Gloria Clingan, my sons-in-law Riki Mahal and Manfred

Kugel who assisted me wherever they could, and Judy Goodzeck, Brian Nolette, Greg Uchacz, and Garry Webber.

A Double Dedication

This study is dedicated to two amazing women who have especially blessed my life and advanced my research by their gracious and selfless interest, encouragement, and assistance.

I dedicate this work to Dr. Elizabeth Bryson Bongie whose command of Greek combined with her delightful outlook on life made Thekla come to life for me. Serendipitously, it was Dr. Bongie who instructed my own advisor, Dr. Westra, in Greek, in the early years of his studies and then these many years later so sweetly consented to help me.

This work is also dedicated to the late Dr. Catherine Clark Kroeger, my own personal “Thekla,” who unceasingly guided and supported me in this endeavor. May it bring honour to her memory. It is my desire to take up, in some small part, where she has left off.

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List of Abbreviations

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>AE</i>	<i>L'Année épigraphique</i>
<i>Anal. Boll.</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt.</i> Edd. H. Temporini and W. Haase. 1972--
<i>ATh</i>	<i>Acts of Thekla</i>
<i>APTh</i>	<i>Acts of Paul and Thekla</i>
<i>BHG</i>	F. Halkin, ed. <i>Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca</i> (= <i>Subsidia hagiographica</i> , 8a) Brussels, 1957
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i>
<i>CHSB</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae.</i> 1838. Edited by I. Bekker. Bonn
<i>CIG</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>Coll. Wadd.</i>	E. Babelon. 1898. <i>Inventaire sommaire de la collection Waddington.</i> Paris
<i>CRAI</i>	<i>Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
<i>DECB</i>	<i>A Dictionary of Early Christian Biography.</i> [1877, 1911] 1999, revised. Edited by Henry Wace and William Piercy. Reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers
<i>DACL</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i>
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>Eph. Ep.</i>	Mommsen, Theodore. 1872-1910. <i>Ephemeris epigraphica. Corporis Inscriptionum Latinarum Supplementum.</i> Inst. Arch. Rom., I-IX. Rome-Berlin
<i>GCS</i>	<i>Die griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte.</i> 1891--. Edited by Adolf Harnack and Theodor Mommsen. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin
<i>HT</i>	Hagia Thekla
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
<i>IGBulg</i>	G. Mikailov. <i>Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria Repertae</i>

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>IGLS</i>	<i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie</i>
<i>IGR</i>	R. Cagnat <i>et al.</i> <i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>LCL</i>	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i>
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell and Scott, rev. by Jones. <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> , 9 th Edition. Oxford: 1940
<i>MAMA</i>	<i>Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua</i> . Edited by W.M. Calder and J. M.R. Cormack, 8 vols. Publications of the American Society for Archaeological Research in Asia Minor. Manchester: 1928-1962
<i>NPNF</i>	<i>A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church</i> . New York 1887-92; Oxford 1890-1900
<i>NT/OT</i>	New Testament/Old Testament
<i>ODB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> . 1991. Edited by Alexander P. Kazhdan <i>et al.</i> Oxford: Oxford University Press
<i>ODCC</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church</i>
<i>OGIS</i>	W. Dittenberger. <i>Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae</i> I-II, 1903-5
<i>PAES</i>	<i>Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria</i> . William Kelly Prentice. 1904-1905 and 1909
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca</i> . Edited by J. P. Migne <i>et al.</i> Paris. 1857-66
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina</i> . Edited by J. P. Migne <i>et al.</i> Paris. 1844-55
<i>PICA</i>	<i>Princeton Index of Christian Art</i>
<i>PIMS</i>	Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies
<i>PLRE</i>	Martindale, J. R. 1971. <i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire—A.D. 395-527</i> . Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
<i>PO</i>	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i> . Edited by R. Graffin and F. Nau <i>et al.</i> Paris. 1903--
<i>RE</i>	<i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , 49 vols. Edited by A. von Pauly <i>et al.</i> Stuttgart, 1894-1980

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Definition</u>
SynaxCP	<i>Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae</i> . 1902. Edited by Hippolyte Delehaye. Brussels
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> . Leiden 1923--
TAVO	<i>Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients</i> . 1969-1994. 12 vols. University of Tübingen
TLG	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</i>

Epigraph

Unde manifestum est, melius dici vitam patrum quam vitas, quia, cum sit diversitas meritorum virtuumque, una tamen omnes vita corporis alit in mundo. (Gregory of Tours, *Life of the Fathers*, preface)

It is better to speak of the *Life* of the Fathers (rather than lives) all the more so since there is a diversity of merits and virtues among them but the one Life [of Jesus] of the body sustains them all in this world. (*Life of the Fathers*, preface, trans. by K. Rusch in Heffernan (1988), 7, with my elaboration)

[Π]ροασπιστής δέ μου καὶ προστάτης ἐστὶ Θεός, καὶ ὁ τούτου μονογενῆς Υἱός ...Ἐπὶ τούτον τοίνυν τὸν Ἰησοῦν θαρροῦσα καὶ πιστεύουσα... περιέγωνα... Καὶ πᾶς δέ τις εἰς αὐτὸν θαρρῶν καὶ πιστεύων γνησίως, τῶν ἴσων ἔμοι ἢ καὶ μειζόνων ἐπατεύξεται χαρισμάτων. Οὗτος [Ἰησοῦς] γάρ, φησί, ὁ μόνος σωτηρίας ὄρος ἐστὶ, καὶ ζωῆς ἀθανάτου ὑπόστασις, ἔτι γε μὴν καὶ χειμαζομένων προσφύγιον καὶ θλιβομένων ἄνεσις καὶ ἀπελπισμένων σκέπη. (*Life of Thekla*, 22. 58-73)

[M]y Champion and Protector is God, and His only begotten Son...Having confidence in this Jesus...and believing in Him, I have prevailed..And every person genuinely having confidence in and belief in Him will meet with graces equal to mine and better. For this [Jesus]...is a pillar of salvation, and a foundation of life everlasting, a refuge, to be sure, for those still beset-by-storms, and a remission for those in distress and a shelter for those without hope. (*Life of Thekla*, 22. 58-73, Elizabeth Bongie's translation)

INTRODUCTION

Thekla of Iconium is one of Rough Cilicia's most well-known and beloved saints but there is still much to be discovered about her.¹ Events of Thekla's life are recorded in texts spanning several centuries, most of which originate in Asia Minor. The earliest extant account is contained in the *Acts of Paul and Thekla* (hereafter, *APTh*),² a second-century work whose roots are thought by some to have originated in the first century in Galatic Phrygia.³ The *APTh* chronicles Thekla's first-century conversion in Iconium, her martyrial competitions at Iconium and Antioch, and her miraculous deliverance into the cleft of the rock after having ministered for seventy-two years in and around Seleucia, the cosmopolitan and cultural crossroads of Rough Cilicia (today's southeastern Mediterranean coast of Turkey).

The "crowning jewel"⁴ of Thekla texts may well be, however, the diptychal *Life and Miracles of Thekla* (hereafter, *L&M*), composed in the fifth century by an anonymous author (hereafter, Ps.-Basil) a resident of Seleucia.⁵ In the *Life* (hereafter, *Life*), the first part of the *L&M*, Ps.-Basil recaps and expands the story of the original *APTh*, laying the groundwork for the second part of his composition, the forty-six-miracle corpus (hereafter referred to as *Miracles*; individual miracles will be designated as *Mir.* with its respective number).

The *Miracles* provide a frank and lively description of individuals from a variety of social strata, whose lives were impacted by Thekla, primarily at her *temenos*,⁶ or sacred precinct, the Hagia Thekla (hereafter, HT), which was located near present-day

Silifke, Turkey. Thekla's life has been characterized as one of "useful activity" and the *Miracles* record her post-disappearance thaumaturgical activity. Her life served as an inspiration for her devotees and has captured the imagination of the Church almost since its inception.

Thekla and her story, however, has not escaped what Brit Berggren, in *Greece and Gender*, identifies as a persistent tendency to appropriate and reconstruct antiquity for the purpose of legitimizing new values.⁷ Berggren argues that antiquity's "capacity for variation and change" renders it susceptible to empirical studies designed to fit the necessity of the audience. Thekla's story (even from the earliest years) met with numerous redactions and amplifications (among which perhaps the *Life and Miracles of Thekla* may be the most ambitious) and has been the subject of scholarly appropriation and application.

The motivation for this study springs from my desire to discover what can be known about the real Thekla (and the tradition associated with her) that is consonant with the physical record and maintains the integrity of the texts. The intent of this study is to provide a contextualization of Thekla by an examination and synthesis of pertinent primary and, to a lesser extent, secondary source material.

Such an inquiry to this point has been impeded by limited access to the text of the *Miracles*, an essential component for examining the life and cult of Thekla, previously available only in the original Greek edition and French translation by G. Dagron, the *Vie et Miracles de Sainte Thècle* (1978).⁸ My translation (found at the end of this dissertation in Chapter 14), the first translation of the text in its entirety into English, based on Dagron's edition, will play an integral part in this study. A close reading of the text will

illuminate details of Thekla's life and cult as well as provide a window to celebrations and festivals of the early Church. A thorough examination of the genre, content, and structure of the text will provide insight for further study on miracle collections. Primarily, however, our understanding of Thekla, her life, and legacy will be greatly enhanced.

This study will revisit early scholarship on Thekla, incorporate observations from the excellent work done by Spanish scholars on Thekla, incubation, and miracle collections largely overlooked in scholarship, introduce numismatic, onomastic, epigraphic, and historical data that has not yet been applied, and synthesize current scholarship in new ways that will provide clarity to ongoing debates about Thekla. To facilitate further study, in addition to the translation of the *Miracles*, I also provide my translation of the *Virtuous Deeds of the Holy Apostle and Protomartyr Thekla in the Myrtle Wood* (hereafter, *Myrtle Wood*) as well as historical tables of pertinent information hitherto overlooked, and a map that delineates Thekla's territory specific to the time period we are discussing.

In the course of this inquiry, I will address questions that have arisen in scholarship including Thekla's historicity, her characterization as a proto-feminist and her appropriateness as a role model for women's empowerment, the importance and presence of Christ and biblical reference in the *Miracles*, the place and significance of healing and incubation in the *Miracles* (and Thekla's primary characterization as a healing saint), the charge of heresy attached to the faith community at Hagia Thekla (hereafter HT), the authorship and original date of the *Ath*, as well as the genre, authorship, and structure of the *Miracles*. I also raise new questions such as why Thekla

chose to go to Seleucia and why that matters, why Thekla is characterized as a choral leader by Ps.-Basil and its connection to the phrase “chorus of virgins” so ubiquitous in Christian texts of Late Antiquity, and of what significance is her three-fold characterization as Apostle, Martyr, and Virgin. I identify the date of Thekla’s annual festival by means of an independent primary source. And I discuss the meanings of specific lexical items in the *Miracles* and how that affects one’s understanding and interpretation of the text and of Thekla.

This study 1) situates Thekla in regard to her time and place in the development of early Christianity as a sainted miracle-worker in the eastern frontier region of the Roman Empire, specifically among the client kingdoms of Rough Cilicia; 2) addresses Thekla’s significance as an early Christian woman for her devotees and other later Christians in terms of identity and self-actualization as evinced by text, site, and cult; and 3) provides a touchpoint, consonant with both the physical and textual record, for further studies. Ultimately, this study speaks to the interstices of narrative, history, faith and identity.

Notes to the Introduction

¹ For general information on Thekla, see Dagron (1978); and Davis (2001), 18-48, especially 22-6.

² Lipsius and Bonnett (1972), 235-72.

³ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 415.

⁴ Johnson (2006), 5.

⁵ The *L&M* was at one time attributed to Basil, a bishop of Seleucia, among whose works Photius records a composition on Thekla (no longer extant) but specifically in the form of verse; however, the *L&M* is a prose work. Having noted this discrepancy, scholars have employed the name “Ps.-Basil” for the anonymous author. I have retained this designation. Davis (2001), 6, n. 4, chooses, instead, to drop the name altogether and simply refers to “the author” or “the writer.” In the absence of new evidence regarding authorship, comparative analyses, both stylistic and lexical, labour intensive though they may be, between the *L&M* and the extant works of Basil of Seleucia (bearing in mind that they are of different genre) might yield insight as to authorship. See López-Salvá (1972-3), 223-5.

⁶ Throughout the body of the dissertation I use the word *temenos* in a general sense to refer to the entire complex at HT, unless otherwise stated. In my translation, however, at the end of this study, and in Appendix A on the Archaeology of Hagia Thekla, the term is semantically specific.

⁷ Bergreen (1995), intro.

⁸ Dagron, G., ed. 1978. *Vie et Miracles de Sainte Thècle: Texte grec, traduction, et commentaire*. Subsidia Hagiographica 62. Brussels. See Halkin’s review of Dagron’s study in *Anal. Boll.* 96 (1978), 404.

CHAPTER 1:
THEKLA: PRIMARY CONSIDERATIONS

The story of Thekla began only a few years after the resurrection of Christ and before the reign of Nero and before Christianity became an illicit religion. The story, though rooted in the mid-first century, developed over time and spanned several centuries. It is bookended by two distinctly different eras: the Imperial Period (early-first to early-fourth centuries) and the Late Classical/Early Byzantine Period (mid-fourth to seventh centuries)⁹. A significant text is linked to each period: the *Acts of Thekla (ATH)* and the *Life & Miracles of Thekla*, respectively, both of which were originally written in Greek. Thekla's story springs from the soil of Asia Minor, or as Ramsay has argued,¹⁰ from Galatic Phrygia, and the *Miracles* issue specifically from south-eastern Asia Minor and reflect not only the customs of the Eastern empire but also the ethnicity of the Isaurian people of Rough Cilicia. I must stress here, at the outset of this inquiry, the very "easternicity" of her story.

G. K. Chesterton's¹¹ comment that in the middle ages not all people lived at the same time can also be applied to Late Antiquity and I would add that neither did they all live in the same place. Thekla's story must not, and actually cannot, be filtered through the lens of fourth-century Christianity or of the Western Church, or even that of western Asia Minor. Its affiliations are to points east—to Rough Cilicia, Northern Syria, and Palestine. Some strands of Thekla's story reach to the West and to the Western Church but they do not belong to the nucleus or the framework of her story.

In the West, Thekla functioned more as the embodiment of an ideal—chiefly of virginity—and as one saint among many, including the Virgin Mary and St. Agnes.¹² It is inappropriate to examine the lives of fourth-century women, especially those of the Western empire, to gain insight into the person of Thekla. Rather one ought first study the life of Thekla to gain insight into the lives of Christian women who sought to follow after her and in her footsteps.

Thekla's Story

For those who might be unfamiliar with the story of Thekla, I shall include here a synoptical summary, including details from the *Life & Miracles*.

Thekla, a young girl of eighteen, is engaged and soon to be married to Thamyris, a respected and noble man of her city of Iconium (present day Konya, Turkey). One day, as she sits at her window, Thekla's attention is arrested by a man's voice preaching from a nearby house, the home of Onesiphoros. The preacher is St. Paul. He continues preaching for three days.¹³ His message is the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ and an ascetic life of chastity. Thekla is so enthralled that she refuses food and visitors, including her mother and fiancé with their entreaties to her to leave her seat at the window.

Thekla's fiancé makes inquiries about Paul and denounces him to the governor of the city. Paul is put in prison. Under the cover of night, Thekla bribes the jailor to take her to Paul by means of her mirror and jewels. She sits at Paul's feet and learns more about Jesus Christ and the life of faith. Her mother, upon learning of this turn of events, takes Thekla before the governor who seeks to persuade Thekla to proceed with her

marriage plans. Upon her steadfast refusal, and at her mother's instigation, the governor sentences Thekla to be burnt.

The flames of the pyre are extinguished by a divinely-sent rain and hail storm and Thekla is saved from death. She sets out in search of Paul, finds him staying outside the city in a cave with the family of Onesiphoros (who has fled Iconium because of the trouble with Thekla), and petitions Paul to allow her to accompany him in his travels. He objects on the grounds of her youth and beauty. In response, she cuts her hair and dons men's clothing as a protective measure. Paul is persuaded and they set off for Pisidian Antioch.

When Thekla reached Antioch, an imperial magistrate named Alexander is captivated by Thekla's beauty and, assuming her to be a prostitute, makes advances towards her. She cries out in indignation, grabs the crown from his head, and dashes it to the ground. For this sacrilege, the local magistrate sentences Thekla to be thrown to wild beasts on the morrow.

Thekla requests that she be safely sequestered throughout the night so that her virginity not be defiled. Queen Tryphaena receives her into her own home. Thekla reminds her of her recently deceased daughter Falconilla.

The next day Thekla is led in a procession towards the arena. The lion chosen to attack Thekla, and accompanying her in the procession, licks her feet. The spectators and especially the women are stunned by the miracle. The women protest the sentence and the procession is brought to a halt, and Thekla is returned to Tryphaena's care.

During the night, Falconilla appears to her mother Tryphaena in a vision encouraging her to solicit Thekla's prayers on behalf of her salvation. At Tryphaena's

request, Thekla offers up an intercessory prayer for Falconilla. Alexander arrives soon after to take Thekla to the arena where the spectators are waiting. Typhaena cries out against Alexander and he flees the house.

Municipal soldiers then arrive to escort Thekla to the arena. Tryphaena and Thekla walk hand in hand to the arena. Tryphaena is separated from Thekla who is left to face the wild beasts. The lioness chosen to attack Thekla instead licks her feet, shields her, and fights as her ally. In some accounts, the women of Antioch including Queen Tryphaena are moved by her plight. In a show of solidarity they throw flower petals into the arena. The scent of the flowers has a soporific effect on the wild beasts.

More beasts are sent against Thekla. Stripped and wearing only a cincture, she prays to the Lord for deliverance. Before her is a pool of water with wild sea-creatures and, expecting death, Thekla cries out that in the Lord's name she is baptizing herself and hurls herself into the water. God intervenes with fire that jolts the deadly sea-creatures out of the water. The fire also served as a shield for Thekla's nakedness.

Alexander, outraged by this turn of events, brings out wild bulls against Thekla. The fire used to enrage the bulls burns off Thekla's bonds. All this is too much for Queen Tryphaena who falls into a faint and her body is carried from the arena. The whole city is alarmed thinking that the Queen—who is a relative of the Emperor Claudius—has died. Thekla's trials are abruptly ended. She is acquitted by the governor who publicly acknowledges the miraculous assistance received by Thekla. Thekla is taken to Tryphaena who has revived. Tryphaena publicly adopts Thekla as her heir. They return to Tryphaena's home and, over time, Thekla instructs Tryphaena and her attendants in the

Christian faith, described as “a catechesis from the hearth,”¹⁴ some of whom, including Tryphaena, receive Jesus Christ as their Savior.

All the while, Thekla is searching for news of Paul. She learns that he is preaching in Myra and “changing back into a more masculine costume,” she goes in search of him there. Having found him, she eloquently thanks him and seeks his blessing and prayers on her behalf as she plans to return to Iconium.

For the purposes of this study, and to better understand Thekla’s divine assignment, Paul’s response deserves to be quoted in full here:

Everything to do with you, O Maiden, is going well, and through everything the strength of faith prevails for you, and you already are victorious over troubles and [in] deeds of apostolic proportions so that you no longer lack any [qualification] for apostleship and inheritance of the divine message. Off you go, then, and teach the word, and finish the evangelical [course] and share with me zeal on behalf of Christ. For on this account Christ has chosen you through me in order that He may attract you into apostleship and place in your hands some of the cities still uninstructed for it is necessary for you to multiply your talents.¹⁵

Thekla returns to Iconium, finds that Thamyris has died, and shares the message of salvation with her mother who refuses to become a Christian. Thekla leaves Iconium, and sets off for Seleucia.

Having arrived at Seleucia, Thekla takes up residence a short distance from the city. She devotes the rest of her life to preaching and teaching. She also baptizes and performs miracles. The *Acts of Thekla* and the *Miracle Wood* finish with the following account.

By the time Thekla is almost ninety years old, her healing miracles incite the jealousy of the Seleucian doctors who attribute her healing powers to her virginity (thinking her to be a priestess of Artemis) so they hire thugs to sexually assault her. Fleeing her attackers, Thekla calls out to God for deliverance. He prepares an opening in a rock into which she is able to flee and the rock closes behind her. Only a corner of her *maphorion* is left outside the crack.

Although Ps.-Basil does not include that episode, he records Thekla's disappearance as follows:

She—still alive—penetrated and entered the earth—thus it seemed good to God for that earth to divide for her and to split-downwards in the spot in which the sacred and holy and liturgical table had been fixed, [a table] placed in a peristyle and a shining-silver circle.¹⁶

Ps.-Basil ends the *Life* with an invocation of the post-disappearance Thekla for her blessings.

Festugière suggests that pilgrims to Hagia Thekla understood Thekla's body to have been entombed in the altar; according to Dagron, Ps.-Basil crafted the disappearance account to divert attention from the absence of her body and instead to allow for her living, eternal, and intercessory presence. Cooper addresses this when she writes:

In this way the fifth-century version of the *Life* of Thecla sanctifies the place of liturgical celebration by identifying the altar as the point of Thecla's spiritual residence, much as an altar containing relics would have served as a point of contact between the pilgrim and saint.¹⁷

The endings of *ATH* and the *Miracle Wood* are similar to each other and differ from that given in the *Life*. The following ending is from the *ATH*.

Thus suffered that first Martyr and Apostle of God and Virgin Thecla; who came from Iconium at eighteen years of age; afterwards, partly in journeys and travels, and partly in a monastic life in the cave, she lived seventy-two years; so that she was ninety years old when the Lord translated her.¹⁸

The preceding passage identifies Thekla as eighteen years of age at the time of her conversion. Paul is thought to have visited Iconium in approximately A.D. 48 which places Thekla's date of birth in approximately A.D. 30 at which time Jesus was engaged in his public ministry. If she was, as the passage indicates, ninety years "when the Lord translated her", her death can be placed in or near 120.¹⁹ The period from 30 to 120 spans the imperial reigns from Tiberius to Hadrian.

An alternate ending for the *ATH* omits the disappearance altogether and provides less drama:

And Thecla arose and said to Paul, "I am going to Iconium"
But Paul said, "Go and teach the word of God!"...And
when she had borne this witness she went away to Seleucia;
and after enlightening many with the word of God she slept
with a noble sleep.²⁰

To these must be added yet another ending to the story, one that arises from the seventh century in relation to the Thekla cult at Rome:

But by the providence of God she entered, still alive, into the rock and lodged herself beneath the earth. And she travelled to Rome to visit Paul...and found him already dead. Having remained there briefly, she fell into a sweet sleep. She is buried two or three stadia from the tomb of her teacher Paul.²¹

This later revision expands upon the shared theme of Thekla's disappearance into the ground or the rock. One might argue, as does Cooper, that based on the phrase "beneath the earth," the expansion has stronger affinities with the ending by Ps.-Basil in

the *Life* than with the *ATH* but that is not necessarily the case. In this expansion, Thekla miraculously travels subterraneously to Rome. As Cooper remarks, “there is much remaining work to be done before an adequate understanding is reached of Thekla’s “afterlife.”²² It is the *Miracles* alone that carries forward the story of Thekla and her post-disappearance thaumaturgical activity.

The Manuscript Tradition for the *Miracles* of Thekla

According to Dagron, the *Life & Miracles* experienced a more or less accidental diffusion which perhaps explains its false attribution to Basil, a bishop of Seleucia (c. 450), who was a contemporary of the anonymous author of the work and a fellow resident of Rough Cilicia.²³ Basil received titular attribution for the text perhaps because he was, as attested by Photius, the author of many other works including several homilies and a poem about Thekla and her life. He was not, however, the author of the *Life & Miracles* as will be discussed.²⁴

The *Life & Miracles* is a two-part text. The *Life* is an expansion or amplification of the *ATH* (see discussion at the end of this section) while the *Miracles* are an account of Thekla’s post-disappearance thaumaturgical activity primarily in her divinely assigned territory or *χώρα*. The *Life & Miracles* is approximately ten times as long as the *ATH*.²⁵

Although the *Life* appears independently of the *Miracles*, the forty-six-miracle corpus never appears independently of the *Life*. There are twelve extant manuscripts that contain the *Life* and four of those also contain the *Miracles*. The *Miracles* are included in the following manuscripts:

- Vaticanus gr. 1667 = V. This manuscript, containing lacunae, is a menologue for June and dates to the tenth century.

- Mosquensis synod 26 = M. This manuscript dates to the eleventh century.
- Atheniensis 2095 = A. This manuscript dates to the twelfth century and is in the best condition of the three. It is part of a metaphrastic menologue for September 24, Thekla's feast day in the Eastern churches.
- M and A complete the lacunae for V. Additionally, fragments of both the *Life* and the *Miracles* are contained in a few folios of a tenth-century palimpsest, Vaticanus gr. 1853 = U.

All three extant manuscripts that include the *Miracles* belong to family Ψ , a family less ancient than that of family Σ which is less represented but has better readings and fewer additions. In Dagron's opinion, for a tradition so diffuse, it would be artificial to propose a stemma. In Dagron's edition of the *Life & Miracles*, he used family Σ for the *Life* while for the *Miracles*, he necessarily used family Ψ . I have not examined the manuscripts but have worked from the text that Dagron provides in his 1978 work, *Vie et Miracles de Sainte Thècle: Texte grec, traduction, et commentaire* (Subsidia Hagiographica 62. Brussels).

The Reception of the *Acts of Thekla* (*ATH*)

Ps.-Basil employed the *Acts of Thekla* as his source text for the *Life* which may be considered as a paraphrastic expansion of the *ATH*.²⁶ The *Acts of Thekla* was originally written in Greek. The oldest extant manuscript of the *ATH* is in Syriac (sixth century) but internal evidence attests to its Greek source. Extant manuscripts of the text are in Syriac, Greek, Latin, Armenian, and Slavonic.²⁷

Some scholars regard the *ATH* as the earliest extra-biblical Christian text. M. S.

Reinach comments:

Thus the core of the Thekla story—and I must insist on the word *core* for none of the present texts can be considered as authentic—is not only the most ancient of the Christian

writings that the church deems 'apocryphal'; it is, with all proper reserve to Paul's epistles, the most ancient Christian work we possess.²⁸

Reinach suggests the first redaction to be situated between 60 and 90;²⁹ Ramsay proposes a date of 50-70 for the primitive piece of writing.³⁰ Aymer traces two distinct "generating stories" that come together in the *Acts of Thekla*—the Iconian narrative and the Antiochene, which Ramsay identifies as the nucleus of the story. Ramsay postulates that these two different traditions were united in the *Acts of Paul and Thekla* (c. 130-150).³¹

The *Acts of Thekla* predate the *Acts of Paul* but were also circulated in the *Acts of Paul and Thekla* (*APTh*) which, in some manuscripts, also include the letter of *Third Corinthians*. The earliest known reference to the story of Thekla is in conjunction with the *Acts of Paul* which fell under censure by Tertullian and was rendered suspect by his comments. In independent circulation from the *Acts of Paul*, the *ATh* was well received. Festugière³² claims that for the vast majority of readers it held canonical value. Numerous patristic authors cited the *ATh* and it was read by Egeria upon her visit to Hagia Thekla.

The *APTh*, however, was counted by Eusebius among the apocryphal books. Athanasius of Alexandria (*Ep.* 39) does not include the *APTh* in his list of non-canonical books useful for instruction and piety. The *APTh* is explicitly excluded from canonical scripture in the seventh-century *De libris recipiendis et non recipiendis* of Gelasius.³³

In conclusion, the nucleus of the story of Thekla is regarded by many scholars as historical,³⁴ is thought to have originated c. 50-70, and has captured the imagination of Christians for centuries, including that of Ps.-Basil.

Date of Composition of the *Life & Miracles*

The *Life & Miracles* was completed somewhere between 468 and 476 almost three centuries later than its source text, the *ATH*. The *Life* was written prior to the *Miracles* as attested by the author himself in the prologue to the work. There is no mention in the *Life & Miracles* of Emperor Zeno's benefaction (c. 476) to the *temenos* at Hagia Thekla, so most likely, the text was written before that date.³⁵

Dagron suggests a series of redactions for the *Miracles* that cover a period of forty years, from approximately 430 to 470, and roughly corresponds to the tenures of four Seleucian bishops—Dexianos, John, Basil, and Porphyrios—all of whom are mentioned in the text.³⁶ Johnson summarizes the redactionary history compiled by Dagron as follows: 1) the first redaction which ended with *Mir.* 44 was written with a terminus post quem of 444 and an antequem of 448; and 2) the second redaction, with the addition of *Mir.* 12, was composed between 448 and 468; and 3) the last version was written between 468 (with the bishopric of Porphyrios as the fixed point) and 476 (the date of Zeno's benefactions to Hagia Thekla), appending to *Mir.* 44 two additional miracles and an epilogue.³⁷

In regard to the textual considerations pertinent to the redactional history of the *Miracles*, López-Salvá notes two miracles in the collection that contain chronologically-specific data: 1) *Mir.* 25 concerns the non-believing sophist Isokasios whose conversion, according to Socrates, was in 467 and 2) *Mir.* 4 mentions General Vitianos who fought against the Persians under Theodosius II in 431. These data support the thesis of Honigman (to which López-Salvá adheres) that the *Miracles* were elaborated during the episcopate of John. She holds to this opinion for three reasons: 1) The *Miracles* imply, by

means of a Homeric citation, that Bishop Dexianos had already died; 2) they praise a living Bishop John (*Mir.* 30); and 3) there is no mention of the dogmatic debates and councils of the time.³⁸

Dagron describes the text not as a minor work of a great author but as “l’oeuvre majeure et même unique d’un personnage de moindre volée...obsédé par la sainte à laquelle il consacre sa plume et un talent.”³⁹ The *Life & Miracles*, with its several redactions, was a work in progress for as many as forty years and might be regarded as the life work of Ps.-Basil.

Scholarship

The first wave of scholarship on St. Thekla dates to the late-nineteenth-/early-twentieth century. The famous archaeologist Sir William Ramsay is preeminent among the early scholars on Thekla and laid the groundwork for studies that followed.⁴⁰ Ramsay, while without the benefit of later epigraphic and numismatic discoveries, set forth arguments for Thekla’s historicity that influence the scholarly discussion to this day. Contemporary with him were German scholars: L. Deubner (1900)⁴¹ with his study (written in Latin) on incubation miracles; M. S. Reinach (1910)⁴² who supported Ramsay’s positions; and L. Radermacher (1916) who approached the *Life & Miracles* as literature and regarded Thekla as a successor to mythological figures.⁴³

A second wave of interest in Thekla arose around the middle of the twentieth century among French scholars including Dagron⁴⁴ and Festugière⁴⁵ who concentrated primarily on the text itself. Dagron provided the first complete French translation and commentary on St. Thekla. Festugière sought to situate the place of the text among other miracle collections.

Spanish scholars advanced the research particularly in regard to faith healing and incubation. The seminal work, in regard to incubation, is provided by Fernando Marcos (1975)⁴⁶ and was preceded by a brief but comprehensive study of the text with an emphasis on incubation by Mercedes López-Salvá (1972).⁴⁷

Feminist scholars, many of whom were men, pursued Thekla studies in the 1980s seeing Thekla as a proto-type for women's empowerment: Dennis MacDonald, Willy Rordof, Virginia Burrus, and Steven Davies, to name a few.⁴⁸

The archaeology of the site has been well-documented by Herzfeld and Guyer (1930),⁴⁹ Hild, Hellenkemper, and Hellenkemper-Salies (1984),⁵⁰ Hellenkemper (1986), and Hild and Hellenkemper (1990).⁵¹ Stephen Hill (1996) has provided the most recent discussion on the site itself.⁵² The archaeology of Hagia Thekla is discussed in Appendix A of this study with additional insights kindly provided by Dr. H. Hellenkemper. Also in Appendix A, I include a brief discussion of the building and architectural terms contained in the *Life and Miracles*.

Interest in Thekla studies is increasing. In 1995, Kate Cooper published a brief but original article on the cult of St. Thekla in Rome.⁵³ Stephen Davis (2001) published his previous doctoral work that examines Thekla's cult at Seleucia and particularly in Egypt.⁵⁴ Catherine Burris and L. Van Rompay (2002-3) are pioneering Thekla studies as preserved in the Syriac tradition.⁵⁵ The most recent contribution is the literary study of the *Life & Miracles* by Scott F. Johnson (2006).⁵⁶

Authorship

Based on the titles of the four extant manuscripts (tenth to twelfth centuries), authorship of the *Life & Miracles* was long attributed to Basil of Seleucia.⁵⁷ The

attribution may also have been due in part to a reference by Photius in the ninth century to a poem by Basil about “the deeds, contests, and victories” of Thekla.⁵⁸ Since the *Life & Miracles* is a prose work, it cannot be identified with the poem.

Dagron notes that the style of the *ATH* and the *Miracles* is distinctly different from that of Basil’s homilies—but acknowledges that the two genres are difficult to compare and that the endeavour is all the more difficult due to the uncertain attribution of some of Basil’s works. López-Salvá, who accepts Basil’s authorship, suggests a lexical and stylistic analysis be done to settle the matter. Failing that, the internal evidence of the text itself strongly witnesses against the authorship of Basil of Seleucia.

The author of the *Miracles* verbally attacks Bishop Basil in the text itself. He rages against Basil by whom, for a time, he was excommunicated (*Mir.* 12). Basil is his arch enemy whom he identifies as a mischievous upstart, *μειράκιον* (44), and whom he accuses of drunkenness, *οίνοφλυγίαν* (68-9). In regard to his excommunication by Basil, he writes as follows:

And Thomas, a holy man dear to God...in no way bore lightly the judgment against me emanating from an unjust and treacherous mind. And going immediately into the council concerning us, he kept crying out against Basil and Euboulos, rebuking their ridiculous plotting against me, their stupid lying, their inept slander, their shameless wickedness...⁵⁹

To champion Basil as the author of the *Life & Miracles* would be to accept that he excommunicated himself, thought poorly of himself, and was his own worst enemy. In light of the internal witness of the text, the fact that titular attribution was given to Basil suggests that the copyists were faithfully copying a common error in their exemplars.⁶⁰

Apart from information gleaned from the text, little is known of its author. By default, he has been called Ps.-Basil. Johnson takes exception to this appellation because, he argues, it perpetuates the idea of a positive relationship between Basil and the author that did not exist. While I agree with Johnson's position, for continuity of scholarship, I have chosen to retain the name.

Dagron describes Ps.-Basil as a lay person who, in the course of his composition of the *Life & Miracles* (an endeavour that spanned at least twenty five years, c. 448–475), rose to the rank of preacher/teacher. Ps.-Basil makes no allusions, however, to any elevation beyond that and may never have become a bishop.⁶¹ The *Miracles* suggest that throughout his career Ps.-Basil experienced difficulties with the ecclesiastical elite of Seleucia. Dagron notes that the final invocation of Thekla in the *Miracles* supposes a second excommunication or deposition experienced by the author:

O Thrice-blessed One [Thekla], make that dog, that ferocious swine, that base and perverse Porphyrios desist from his madness and fury against me! For even this man, you see, from base and nameless parents and from unsanctioned fornication, offspring of Famine and Poverty, this miserable era has made him seem to be somebody and to have power, this era that humbled all free and well born [men], but exalted every thief, runaway slave, and grave-robber. With these things in mind, O Virgin, grant that we may be seen again in the holy rostrum of the holy pulpit of this church....⁶²

From this, Dagron posits that the author may have been attached to some heresy or manner of life that was not sanctioned by the Seleucian church. Dagron suggests, as *might* be inferred from the text, that Ps.-Basil lived not in Seleucia but rather at the *temenos* of Hagia Thekla.⁶³ That is not explicitly stated. Ps.-Basil, however, seems to align himself with and express affinity for the community at Hagia Thekla. The text

implies a degree of struggle or latent opposition between a power base represented by Bishops Basil and Porphyrios (whom Ps.-Basil characterizes as usurpers) and that of their direct predecessors who rose from the ranks of the guardians (*paredroi*)⁶⁴ of Thekla whom the author describes as “her very own” (e.g. Dexianos, who was an important figure at the Council of Ephesus). Ps.-Basil may have envisioned himself as one in a long line of episcopal succession to which, in his mind, Basil and his cohorts were outsiders.

No explanation is given for the author’s double excommunication but Dagron sees him as a bit of a maverick, or as perhaps a sectarian of the apotactite or encratite movement, even as a heretic belonging to one of the groups that Epiphanius cites in the latter part of the fourth century that persisted particularly in northern Syria, Cilicia, Pamphylia, and Isauria, roughly the same geographic area of the *Miracles*.⁶⁵ Dagron argues that such a scenario would provide an explanation as to why the *Life & Miracles* does not contain even an echo of the great Christological debates or reference to the ecumenical councils of that day. The statements of faith contained in the *Life & Miracles* are, however, completely orthodox. In Chapter 7, I will examine the apotactite and encratite movements of Ps.-Basil’s day. With the extant information about the author, there are no definitive conclusions that can be reached as to the particular brand of Christianity he may have espoused or to what degree his belief structure might have deviated from the general persuasion.

López-Salvá writes that, based on the data of *Mir. 27*, she perceives the author as “un hombre de Iglesia que tenía a su cargo el economio de la festividad de la Santa.” She identifies a high degree of religious tolerance present in the *Miracles* that is “totamente excepcional en este género literario” in that Thekla seems unconcerned when her

Miracles are wrongly attributed to Sarpedon or when people are not converted.⁶⁶ What has been identified as the absence of intolerance in the *Miracles* may actually be reflective of the desire and conscious decision to not offend non-believers discussed below in the chapter on Genre. Such a sensitivity on the author's part provides an alternative explanation for the absence of textual references to Church councils and debates.

López-Salvá describes the author as someone who received good literary and rhetorical training, who knows geography and the customs of Seleucia, who professes great sympathy with the intellectual circle of his time and who possesses a firm desire to promote and diffuse the cult of Thekla. She applies these characteristics, however, to Basil of Seleucia, arguing that his well-known vacillations in ecclesiastical debates may be consistent with the unusual level of religious tolerance displayed in the text. However, if we accept the testimony of the *Miracles* themselves, Basil was extremely intolerant.

Johnson describes the author as an educated reader and orator⁶⁷ while Dagon refers to him as “le rhéteur-hagiographe.” Dagon describes Ps.-Basil as a Christian who is unquestionably a native of Seleucia and who has the support of a number of friends as well as that of his parents.⁶⁸ He must have also been personable to have persuaded people to share their personal stories about Thekla with him. Johnson notes a general historiographic self-consciousness on the part of the author.⁶⁹ In Dagon's opinion, Ps.-Basil founded his writing career upon Thekla, and his work became, in a sense, an autobiography.

In the work that Ildiko Csepregi is doing on incubation in hagiographies, she notes that

the hagiographer's personality and his literary ambitions certainly left their marks on the structural development of the collections and on their individual compositional features. But what is more fascinating is the way hagiographers create their own image in the text.

Csepregi identifies this process as "narratorial self-fashioning."⁷⁰ Ps.-Basil unabashedly seizes the opportunity for narratorial self-fashioning in the preparation and presentation of his miracle collection. Some have gone so far as to describe the text as narcissistic.

So now, [Thekla], pour forth and bestow your copious and abundant grace on these <writings>, that I may be regarded highly or become so you through you and your grace.⁷¹

Some scholars regard this thinly veiled and calculated self-promotion and self-posturing on the part of Ps.-Basil as contributing factors to the limited reception of the *Miracles*.⁷² The characterization of Ps.-Basil as narcissistic and self-promoting, however, may be inappropriate. If we move beyond his expressed hope for re-instatement and advancement (that may or may not have been correctly interpreted), another picture emerges. Ps.-Basil rarely invokes the ubiquitous modesty *topos*, less frequently by far than even the self-effacing Egeria. He is quick to admit that his offering to Thekla is presented from the *δεικτήριον* or lay podium. He is not disconnected from others. A godly man chose him to write the work. People participated in his gathering of the miracles, sharing their stories with him. During the ordeal of his excommunication, he was supported by his parents and a circle of caring friends and the godly Thomas advocated on his behalf before the examining council. In the epilogue of the *Miracles*, Ps.-Basil displays a deep concern for the spiritual well-being of the Christian community at Seleucia. He has a keen sense of outrage at injustice directed either at himself or at others, an open-hearted tolerance (noted in the scholarship) for non-believers, and a

genuine affection for his city and community. Even the way in which the *Miracles* are designed for a double audience—one, Christian and the other, not-yet-persuaded—suggests a concern for others' spiritual welfare.

Conclusion

The story of Thekla is rooted in the early years of the primitive Church on the southeastern seaboard of Asia Minor. The beginning of the story is dated to approximately A.D. 48, roughly fifteen years after the death and resurrection of Christ, during Paul's first missionary journey. The story in its first form was transmitted in the first century, consequently met with several redactions and, finally, in the mid-fifth century was amplified by an anonymous author, referred to as Ps.-Basil, a resident of Seleucia ad Calycadnum (hereafter, Seleucia) in Rough Cilicia, to which he added the *Miracles of Thekla* written over a period of approximately forty years that records Thekla's thaumaturgical activity primarily in and around Seleucia. There are only four extant manuscripts of the *Miracles* and these are preserved only in conjunction with the *Life*.

Notes to Chapter 1

- ⁹ For an elaboration on these time periods in regard to literature see *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* vol. 2 1175, 1236.
- ¹⁰ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 415.
- ¹¹ Chesterton (2006), Chapter 7.
- ¹² For more on this, see Hayne (1994), 211-12, 217.
- ¹³ This is not inconsistent with the picture of Paul in the Book of Acts. In Acts 20:7-12, Paul preached so late into the night that a certain Eutychus, having fallen into a deep sleep, fell to the ground from the third story, was picked up dead, and had to be resuscitated!
- ¹⁴ *Life* 24.28. Please note that short references to the *Life*, the *Miracles*, and other ancient sources may appear within the text. All English translations of the *Life* were provided by Dr. Elizabeth Bryson Bongie. All English translations of the *Miracles* are my own though a large debt is owed to Dr. Bongie for her invaluable direction, suggestions for improving the text, and constructive criticism as I translated the *Miracles*. The Greek text of the *Life* was taken from *Diogenes*. The Greek text of the *Miracles* and all line numbering used in the thesis follow that of Dagron's 1978 edition.
- ¹⁵ *Life* 26.58-67. For more on talents, see Matt. 25:14-30.
- ¹⁶ *Life* 28.11-14.
- ¹⁷ Cooper (1995), 1-23, esp. 8.
- ¹⁸ *ATH*, ending cod. G. All quotations (with line numbering) from the *ATH* are taken from the St. Pachomius Edition available through www.fordham.edu/halsall/bases/thecla.html. Where there are two sets of numbers citing *ATH*, the second set is from the Greek text by Lipsius and Bonnet in the *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha* (1959).
- ¹⁹ All dates are A.D. unless otherwise noted as B.C.
- ²⁰ *ATH* 43.5-7.
- ²¹ Variant ending to the *APTh* in mss. A (Parisinus graecus 520, saec. XI), B (Parisinus graecus 1454, saec. X), and C (Parisinus graecus 1468, saec. XI). In Lipsius and Bonnet (1972), 201-1.
- ²² Cooper (1995), 2-4.
- ²³ Dagron (1978), 140.
- ²⁴ See below, page 18, Authorship.
- ²⁵ See Johnson (2006), 5.
- ²⁶ See Johnson (2006), Chapter 1.
- ²⁷ See Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 376.
- ²⁸ Rordorf (1986), 48 cites Reinach, *Thékla* (1910), 136.
- ²⁹ Dagron (1978), 235 n. 2 cites Reinach (1910), 32-5.
- ³⁰ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 392 and 414.
- ³¹ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 392 and 416-23.
- ³² Festugière (1968), 60.
- ³³ Decree of Gelasius, chp. VI.
- ³⁴ On the "scholarly hypotheses concerning the historicity" of *Thekla*, see the agenda-driven article by Rordorf (1986).
- ³⁵ Evagrius Scholasticus' description of Zeno's benefactions to the *temenos* (Bk. 3. 8) appears to be the last primary source reference to the site. See Johnson (2006), 5.
- ³⁶ Dagron (1978), 17-19.
- ³⁷ Johnson (2006), 5-6, n. 18.
- ³⁸ López-Salvá (1972-3), 222.

- ³⁹ Dagron (1978), 13.
- ⁴⁰ Ramsay ([1890] 1962); Ramsay ([1893] 1907).
- ⁴¹ Deubner (1900).
- ⁴² Reinach (1910), 103-40.
- ⁴³ Radermacher (1916).
- ⁴⁴ Dagron (1974), 5-11; Dagron (1978).
- ⁴⁵ Festugière (1971), 11-32.
- ⁴⁶ Marcos (1975).
- ⁴⁷ López-Salvá (1972-3), 217-321.
- ⁴⁸ See MacDonald (1986), Burrus (1986), Davies (1986), and Rordorf (1986).
- ⁴⁹ Herzfeld and Guyer (1930), 1-89.
- ⁵⁰ Hild, Hellenkemper, and Hellenkemper-Salies (1984), 182-356.
- ⁵¹ Hild and Hellenkemper (1990).
- ⁵² Hill (1996), 208-34.
- ⁵³ Cooper (1995), 1-23.
- ⁵⁴ Davis (2001).
- ⁵⁵ Burrus and van Rompay (2002); Burrus and van Rompay (2003).
- ⁵⁶ Johnson (2006). See also Honey (2006a).
- ⁵⁷ Dagron (1978), 18, has set the date of the final redaction of the *Miracles* somewhere between 468 and 475; however, 458 has long been accepted by scholars following Tillemont, as the date of Basil's death. That alone would have disqualified Basil from authorship of the *Life & Miracles*; however, the testimony of the Monophysite bishop John Rufus, *Plerophoriae* 22, trans. Nau, ed. Brière, *PO*. 8.46, n. 4) concerning Peter the successor to Pampreius, bishop of Titopolis (of Isauria), in 468, whose desire for the bishopric seduced him to accept the Chalcedonian creed and to "be of the same opinion as the metropolitan Basil," has required a revision for the date of Basil's death. See Ernst Honigmann (1953), 180-4.
- ⁵⁸ Phot. *Bibl.* 168 in total cites fifteen texts of Basil. These are included among the thirty-five homilies contained in the tenth-century codex Florentinus Laurentinus pluteus VII, 1. Tevel (1989), 396-401.
- ⁵⁹ *Mir.* 12.75-84.
- ⁶⁰ Dagron (1974), 5-7 and (1978), 13-14, addresses the implications of their oversight in regard to the attribution of the work.
- ⁶¹ Dagron (1974), 8.
- ⁶² *Mir.* epilogue 24-32.
- ⁶³ Dagron (1974), 10-11.
- ⁶⁴ For references to the *paredroi* in the *Miracles*, see 7.5 bis; 21; 22.8; 32.10.
- ⁶⁵ Epiph. *Adv. haeres.* 47.1.2.
- ⁶⁶ López-Salvá (1972-3), 223.
- ⁶⁷ Johnson (2006), 222, citing *Mir.* epilogue 31-45; Dagron (1978), 6.
- ⁶⁸ Dagron (1978), 5, 19. See *Mir.* 12.85 for the solidarity shown him by his friends and parents.
- ⁶⁹ Johnson (2006), 115, n. 5.
- ⁷⁰ See <http://harvard.academia.edu/IldikoCsepregi/Blog/4673/Temple-Sleep-from-Antiquity-to-Byzantium>.
- ⁷¹ *Mir.* epilogue 17-19.
- ⁷² See Krueger (2004), 79, 91-2.

CHAPTER 2:
THEKLA'S INFLUENCE IN ANTIQUITY AND THE MIDDLE AGES

In regard to the roughly thirty primary source texts that refer to Thekla, Michel Aubineau writes that they “montrent combien la légende de sainte Thèkle est demeurée vivace en terroir grec, dans les littératures patristique et byzantine.”⁷³ It is my intent in this chapter to show that Thekla's story was in no way peripheral to the late antique and early Byzantine Church but that, instead, her story stirred and fired its imagination, permeated its literature and iconography, and buttressed the courage of Christian believers, both men and women.

Thekla in Greek and Latin *Testimonia*

Excepting the *Acta* themselves, Tertullian's *De baptismo* (c. 200) is thought to contain the earliest reference to Thekla.⁷⁴ According to Cooper, Thekla is the single female figure most frequently referred to by patristic authors for women's imitation.⁷⁵ Ambrose, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Augustine, Gregory Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Sulpicius Severus, Jerome, Ps.-Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and Evagrius Scholasticus are just a few of those who refer to Thekla.⁷⁶ The Ps.-Cyprian prayers, thought to have been written before the fourth century, include an evocation of the example of Thekla:⁷⁷

Assiste nobis, sicut apostolis in vinculis Teclae in ignibus.
(*Oratio* 1)

Liberes me de medio saeculi huius, sicut liberasti Teclam
de medio amphitheatro (*Oratio* 2)

Methodius constructed his entire *Symposium* with Thekla as the protagonist. In 374, after his father's death, and in an attempt to evade an unwelcome episcopal position,

Gregory of Nazianzus withdrew to the shrine of “the highly praised virgin Thekla.”⁷⁸ Ps.-Chrysostom’s panegyric on Thekla indicates that she was already included in the calendar of saints by the fifth century, the latest projected date for the work.⁷⁹ There are numerous *ampullae* dating from the fourth and fifth centuries depicting St. Thekla and even a medallion with Thekla depicted between a lion and a lioness.⁸⁰ John Moschos, the sixth-century pilgrim-monk, rated pilgrimage to Hagia Thekla as equal with the sites of John at Ephesus, Theodore of Tyre at Euchaita, and Saint Sergius at Rosaphat.⁸¹ According to Malalas, Justinian built a church in honour of St. Thekla in Constantinople.⁸² Thekla is the only extra-biblical person enrolled in the *Commendatio Animae*.⁸³ The primary church in Milan until 461, which Ambrose refused to turn over to the Arians, was the Church of St. Thekla.⁸⁴ After Thekla appeared to the emperor Zeno in a vision during the usurpation of Basiliscus and promised the restoration of Zeno’s reign, he became a benefactor of Hagia Thekla.⁸⁵ Theodore of Mopsuestia, the close friend of John Chrysostom and a revered father of the Eastern Church, took refuge at the tomb of the “virtuous Thekla.”⁸⁶ As attested by seventh-century sources, there was a church of St. Thekla at Rome.⁸⁷

The life of Thekla served as a model for many *mulieres religiosae* including Syncletica,⁸⁸ St. Febronia (c. d. 300),⁸⁹ St. Eugenia (c. 284-305), and the friend and benefactress of John Chrysostom, Olympias (c. 366-408).⁹⁰ Theodoret of Cyrhus, in the early part of the fifth century, recorded that Cyra and Marana, two anchorite women from Syrian Beroea, travelled to the shrine of the “triumphant Thekla” in Isauria.⁹¹ For many women, Thekla was their onomastic predecessor.

At the close of the fourth century, Claudian, poet-panegyrist to General Stilicho and the Emperor Honorius, wrote an epigram to a military commander that invokes Thekla's blessing.

So whoever shall swim the chill Danube to fight,
Like the horses of Pharaoh be lost to your sight
So the sword of your vengeance lay Gothic hordes low;
So the blessing of Thekla add strength to your blow...⁹²

It is all the more striking that Claudian should include Thekla in his poem considering Augustine's assessment of him: *poeta Claudianus quamvis a Christi nomine alienus*.⁹³

Athanasius of Alexandria's treatise *On Virginité* addresses a community of virgins whose patron saint is Thekla. Sulpicius Severus writes that Martin of Tours had a vision of Mary, Agnes, and Thekla.⁹⁴ A panegyric to Thekla written by Ps.-Chrysostom (c. 5-7th c.) includes the episode about the suitor who chases Thekla on horseback. In the eighth century, St. John of Damascus composed a hymn for Thekla in which he identifies her as the "far-famed first Champion."⁹⁵ Assemani, in his eighteenth-century *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, noted that Solomon of Bassora, a thirteenth-century Nestorian, wrote that Theodore of Mopsuestia composed an oration on Thekla.⁹⁶ The Manicheans included the *APTh* in their spiritual corpus. Two texts that cite Thekla were included in the Manichean prayer book: 1) the *Ψαλμοὶ Σαρακωτῶν* in which Thekla is named directly after the apostles and before any other women; and 2) the psalms of Heracleides that describe "the God-loving Thekla" as a "despiser of the body."⁹⁷

According to Aubineau, an Armenian homily in honour of St. Stephen lists various leaders in the history of the people of God, and finally the Apostle and Protomartyr Thekla as the leader of the virginal army (*virginei exercitus*) after the

manner of Stephen, “the first-crowned and the beginning of the martyrs of the Catholic Church.”⁹⁸

Based on passages from the Song of Songs, Ambrose draws a parallel between the Church and Thekla (along with other virgins).⁹⁹ Symeon the New Theologian writes that Thekla revealed herself as a “true temple” in opposition to the false temples of the pagans.¹⁰⁰ Severus of Antioch, in the sixth century, delivered a beautiful homily about Thekla, on her feast day, September 24, in which he mentions her “feats and prodigies” and likens her to the “queen” of Psalm 145, long interpreted as a prefiguration of the Church, and presents Thekla as the personification of the Church or, as Monika Pesthy argues, the Church becomes a metaphor for Thekla.¹⁰¹

Apart from the Virgin Mary, Thekla was the first virgin of the church and while Mary preceded Thekla historically, cult veneration of Mary developed later than the cult of St. Thekla. The *Miracles* contain the account of Thekla’s annual appearance in the skies above the village of Dalisandos in a fiery chariot. In this, Thekla can be perceived as a precursor to Mary as *regina coeli* and, at the same time, as associated with Graeco-Roman traditions in which Hera, Athena, and Cybele are depicted as riding in chariots. Ambrose goes so far as to pair the Virgin Mary with Thekla as examples respectively of how to live and how to die.¹⁰² Epiphanius, too, in writing about Mary, explicitly likens her to Thekla (although he stipulates that Mary is more honoured than Thekla).¹⁰³

Namesakes of Thekla

Dedicated virgins often renamed themselves Thekla,¹⁰⁴ including a friend of Gregory of Nazianzus, who was a leader of a convent in Seleucia, as well as an Egyptian virgin who penned the Codex Alexandrinus.¹⁰⁵ Davis, in his study of Thekla’s cult in

Egypt, provides a comprehensive survey of namesakes of Thekla.¹⁰⁶ Jerome referred to Melania the Elder as the “new Thekla.”¹⁰⁷ Thekla was the secret name of Macrina, the sister of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa.¹⁰⁸ Illus, the Christian compatriot of the Emperor Zeno, named one of his daughters Thekla.¹⁰⁹ Honoured among Persian martyrs is another Thekla and her friends, all “daughters of the covenant.”¹¹⁰ In the 700s, a Thekla was numbered among the disciples of the Anglo-Saxon St. Leoba, the sister of St. Boniface. An interesting visual witness for namesakes in the Thekla tradition is a c. seventh-century bronze Coptic cross that shows a nimbed orant, possibly Thekla, with the inscription “St. Thekla, help Symionios and Synesios and Mary and Thekla.”¹¹¹

Within the *Miracles* themselves, there is another Thekla, the mother of little Aurelios, who along with her husband is described as pious.¹¹² In contrast, Ps.-Basil presents the grandmother of Aurelios as distinctly non-Christian. Most likely, she would not have chosen Thekla with its overtly Christian associations as the birth name for her daughter. This Thekla thought so highly of St. Thekla that Aurelios was her *τρόφιμος* (foster child). It is probable that Aurelios’ mother chose the name Thekla for herself upon becoming a Christian.

During the ninth century, a Byzantine empress, wife of Michael II, and her granddaughter princess, the eldest daughter of Theophilus and Theodora, both bore the name of Thekla. Where the Church of Thekla stood at the palace of Blachernae in Constantinople, the younger Thekla had a beautiful chamber constructed where she lived out the last days of her life.¹¹³ In Topping’s words, “special devotion to [Thekla’s] saintly namesake is indicated by the fact that she built and dedicated a chapel to Thekla.”¹¹⁴

Thekla, the Byzantine Composer

Another ninth-century Byzantine woman, thought to have been either a nun or perhaps an abbess for a convent near Constantinople,¹¹⁵ with her chosen monastic name of Thekla, was highly respected as a liturgical composer and sacred poet.¹¹⁶ This Thekla is best known for her canons that are thought to have been composed for liturgical services in the convent. Her only surviving canon, written in honour of the Theotokos, is a joyful hymn of praise celebrating women saints, martyrs, and virgins and, in particular, St. Thekla, whom she calls “protomartyr.”¹¹⁷

While Nikodemus Haioreites, who included Thekla’s canon in his Byzantine collection of hymnographers, referred to her as a “sweet echo”,¹¹⁸ she seems to have been a bit more forceful than that—just like her onomastic predecessor. In an age when (in regard to composition) anonymity was the cultural norm, Thekla embedded her name in the hymn as an acrostic! She has been described as “a self-confident woman, proud not only of herself but also of her sex” as evidenced by the subject matter of her extant canon which was “written by a woman, about women and for women.”¹¹⁹

The Scope of the Cult of Thekla

While Seleucia is considered the “epicentre” of the cult of Thekla, evidence for the cult is also found in Libya, Egypt, Mopsuestia, Bethphage (near Jerusalem), Rome,¹²⁰ Spain (there is a church dedicated to her in Tarragona), and Syria.¹²¹ Today there is a convent of St. Thekla in the United States.

In his book *The Cult of St. Thekla: A Tradition of Women’s Piety in Late Antiquity*, Davis examines the cult of St. Thekla primarily in Asia Minor at Seleucia and in Egypt. He provides a comprehensive survey of the hagiographical and material

evidence for the cult of St. Thekla in the Coptic tradition, from which an independent picture of Thekla, one suited to Egyptian Christianity, emerges. According to Davis' study, Thekla was widely venerated and had an extensive cult in Egypt as discussed in the section on "Thekla in the Coptic Tradition" (below, page 40).

It is the small (about 2000 inhabitants) town of Syrian Maaloula (approximately 48 km north of Damascus) that has the most enduring witness to the cult of St. Thekla. Local tradition is that Thekla died and is buried there. In the town is a monastery of St. Sergius (founded in the fourth century) built over a temple of Apollo. There is also an Antiochian Orthodox convent of St. Thekla. Maaloula is one of the few places where Aramaic is preserved and spoken. Maaloula means "door" or "entrance" and refers to the opening in the rock through which Thekla allegedly fled from her attackers. Her cave-sanctuary lies within the convent that was founded in the tenth century. Pilgrims visit to pay homage to Thekla and to partake of the holy water that flows from the natural spring in the cave. Maaloula contains twenty-two Christian churches and three mosques. Maaloula is a distinctly Christian city in a Muslim land.

As we have seen above, from primary sources other than the *Miracles*, visitors came to Hagia Thekla from as far away as Syria, Spain, and Cappadocia.¹²² The Roman matron Paula, the protégée of Jerome, may well have visited Hagia Thekla during her extended pilgrimage. Jerome, in his letter to Paula's daughter Eustochium, gives an overview of Paula's itinerary which includes Seleucia (which actually lay off the direct path of her travels).¹²³ Although Jerome does not comment on what Paula did there, that does not necessarily preclude a visit to Hagia Thekla. Paul explicitly states in the letter

that he intends to comment only on Paula's visits to *biblical* sites. It is reasonable to assume that Paula, like other pilgrims such as Egeria, visited Hagia Thekla.

Explicit internal evidence from the *Miracles* suggests a geographically limited clientele at Hagia Thekla with people coming primarily from Thekla's own *chōra*—from cities such as Tarsus, Selinous, Aigai, and Erinopolis. Kötting notes, however, that the birds from foreign lands offered by visitors to Hagia Thekla tell us something of the cult's influence and scope: ¹²⁴

[In the courtyard of the sanctuary] there is always someone who throws and scatters seeds of grain, either barley or vetch, so that these grains might serve as feed for the doves resident here or for the other birds as well. For indeed many and variegated are those <birds> living here: swans, cranes, geese, doves, and indeed now even from Egypt and from Phasis. Pilgrims bring these and dedicate them to the martyr because they want to or because they have vowed to. ¹²⁵

Ps.-Basil notes with a degree of pride the presence of birds at Hagia Thekla from as far away as Egypt and the River Phasis which, as Ammianus notes, “borders on the Colchians” (in Georgia near the Black Sea).¹²⁶ The birds from Phasis were most likely pheasants (*φασσιανοί*) which are thought to have derived their name from the river. This would not be the first time pheasants found themselves transported from their home. The notion of their dispersion is reinforced by these words that Martial attributes to a pheasant:

*Argoa primum sum transportata carina: ante mihi notum
nil nisi Phasis erat.*¹²⁷

Kötting notes the remains of the marble work and fragments of wall mosaics found in the entry and apse of the cave church and particularly the mosaic floor of the middle aisle

which consists of woven bands and lines and, at one spot, a pheasant made from glass *tesserae*.¹²⁸

North Africa is another area where Thekla was venerated as evidenced textually by Tertullian and Augustine's references to her and materially by a line of African Red Slipware decorated with martyrial scenes of Thekla and wild animals as discussed below.

Iconography of Thekla

Despite the extensive representation of Thekla over the centuries, to date no visual representations have been found that issue from scenes from the corpus of the *Miracles* itself but only from the story cycle of the *APTh*.¹²⁹ The significance of this will be addressed below.

According to Christopher Walter, representations of Thekla fall primarily into two groups: 1) those in which she is depicted in association with St. Paul and 2) those in which she is depicted between wild beasts¹³⁰ or in other scenes from her martyrdom. To these, a third and equally substantial category should be added—representations of Thekla with other saints.

In the first category, Walter cites a fifth-century ivory casket in the British Museum that depicts St. Paul as seated reading from a scroll with Thekla listening to him from within the walled and nearby city of Iconium.¹³¹

A recent (re)discovery of The Grotto of St. Paul, a cave near Ephesus, is decorated with paintings that include a sequence of scenes with Paul and Thekla inspired by the *ATh* cycle. Renate Pillinger published the find in *Mitteilungen zur christlichen Archäologie* 6 (2000). There are more than three hundred petitions to St. Paul among the graffiti in the cave. The sixth-century fresco with a rendering of Paul, Thekla, and her

mother Theokleia had been covered with layers of plaster. Paul is seated between Thekla and her mother Theokleia, each with appropriate inscription. None of the figures are nimbed. Theokleia, with a dark red veil, is turned towards Paul who has an open codex on his lap. Paul's features in the fresco are very similar to the description given of him in the *ATH*. Both figures have their right hand raised; Paul's in a gesture of teaching and Theokleia's, perhaps, in a sign of protest. Paul's attention is focused on a small, quite ornate house. Thekla, wearing a red veil, is seated at the window of the house.¹³²

Paul is also shown preaching to Thekla in a mural in a fifth-century church in Eschamiadzin, Iberia. In Rome, scholars have discovered a sarcophagus portraying Paul and Thekla traveling in a boat. In the St. Thekla catacomb at Rome, the earliest known icons (dating to the last half of the fourth century) of the Apostles Paul, Peter, Andrew, and John have been discovered.

A piece that spans the two categories is a sixth- or seventh-century triptych the last scene of which presents Paul with right hand raised, emerging from behind a hill while Thekla is flanked by two wild bulls.¹³³

The second category, Thekla depicted with wild beasts, is legitimized by the text. Thekla is described as *ἡ θηριομάχος* three times in the *ATH* and twice in the *Life*.¹³⁴ A. van den Hoek and J. Herrman, Jr. have catalogued a certain line of relief-decorated African Red Slipware produced from the mid-third to fifth centuries in the area of modern Tunisia inscribed with "Domina victoria" acclamations and scenes of a woman, whom they identify as Thekla, with wild animals.¹³⁵

The *Princeton Index of Christian Art (PICA)* catalogues eighteen representations of Thekla with wild beasts. They are found on such diverse media as vessels, *ampullae*, a

ring, pendants, reliefs and a sarcophagus. Among this group is a silver reliquary (thought to be from Claudiopolis—a neighbouring city to Seleucia mentioned in *Mir.* 14) with representations of both Isaurian saints Konan and Thekla between lions.¹³⁶ There is a limestone medallion depicting Thekla with lions and angels.¹³⁷ A gold pendant dating to the fifth or sixth century shows the hand of God extending a wreath to a nimbed, veiled Thekla flanked by two lions.¹³⁸ Also from the fifth or sixth century is a Coptic wooden comb which on the obverse shows an orans Daniel (with Persian cap) between two lions and, on the reverse, Thekla is flanked by two lions.¹³⁹

The trials of Thekla find representation in Egypt. Some of these are examined in two studies, one by Davis, and the other by Nauerth and Warns, that describe the extensive decoration and stunning iconography found on wall panels in funerary chapels in the necropolis of the late-antique Christian community at El Bagawat. Representations of Thekla are found in two of the chapels.

The Chapel of the Exodus contains a wall panel in which seven virgins carrying torches approach a temple.¹⁴⁰ Behind them are scenes in which various people of faith are portrayed in the midst of trials: an orans standing in a grave, Abraham as he prepared to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, and what appears to be the caravan to which Joseph was sold by his brothers. At the top of the composition, and nearest to the virgins, is an orans Thekla, barefoot and in the midst of fiery flames. Davis notes the dark thundercloud above Thekla that spills forth “white dotted x’s” representing hail. Davis describes the scene as a vivid rendering of the account in *APTh* 22. Thekla is the only Christian included in the composition. In the other portion at the top of the frame and in contrast to the intensity of the rest of the composition is a shepherd and his sheep, providing a

moving reminder of the faithfulness of Jesus, the Great Shepherd. The composition speaks volumes –the virgins move steadily onwards and upwards despite impending trials under the protection of Jesus, with Thekla as their example.

Davis associates the depiction of Thekla at El Bagawat with others showing Thekla praying in the fire—one, on a fourth-century glass medallion discovered in Cologne and the other, a fifth-century Coptic textile.¹⁴¹

In the Chapel of the Peace at the El Bagawat necropolis, Paul and Thekla are seated on stools facing each other. Thekla is engaged in writing in a yellow book or tablet while Paul “gestures towards the book with a pointing stick.” Thekla is flanked by Eve and the Virgin Mary.¹⁴² In the Chapel of St. Thecla in Burgos, Spain, a massive carved altarpiece depicts the funeral pyre of the Iconian martyrdom scene from the *Ath*. The men who stoke the fire, however, are represented as Moors.

A third group of representations of Thekla are those in which she is pictured with other saints. These include a seventh-century bronze cross bearing the inscription “St. Thekla, help Symionios and Synesios and Mary and Thekla”; an eleventh-century prefatory page of a menologium for September that includes standing frontal figures of nimbed saints of whom Thekla stands by herself holding a cross and a book; the ivory Borradaile triptych from the tenth century in which she holds a cross; an eleventh-century ivory bookcover on which Thekla is pictured with SS. Cecilia, Agatha of Catania, Agnes of Rome; the early-twelfth-century Lisbjerg Altarpiece on which appear personifications of *caritas* and *modestia* along with Bridget of Kildaire and a nimbed Thekla with a book in her left hand and a star (perhaps the brooch mentioned in *Miracle* 12.95-9?) at her shoulder; a late-twelfth-century wall mosaic with several female Italian saints and Thekla

holding crosses; another mid-twelfth-century wall mosaic that groups Thekla holding a cross with Margaret of Antioch, Radegund of Poitiers, and Scholastica of Montecassino, all of whom are nimbed.¹⁴³

A fourth and smaller category contains miscellaneous representations of Thekla. A nude orans Thekla holding oak leaves looks down from a ninth-century Coptic limestone lintel panel.¹⁴⁴ A tenth-century illuminated menologium presents Thekla as a nimbed orant flanked by mountains.¹⁴⁵ A beautiful early-fourteenth-century silver and copper bust-reliquary of St. Thekla, with braided hair, necklace and jewelled chaplet (Museum of Basel), was confiscated by Nazis during WWII.¹⁴⁶

The most fascinating information in regard to a representation of Thekla is found in the *Myrtle Wood*, the only known text that provides an external link to the *Life & Miracles*.¹⁴⁷ The anonymous author of the *Myrtle Wood* writes about a portrait of Thekla that was commissioned by a pagan priest who had been rendered speechless for three days after Thekla (by divine power that issued forth from her) knocked him from his horse when the priest had approached her “with mischievous intent:”

And when he recovered...he decided to commemorate the significant episode. And so he ordered a portrait artist to be fetched and said to him, “Go off and, as you can imagine, paint a small-faced maiden for me, who is eighteen years old give or take a bit, whose beauty I cannot undertake to describe, wearing earrings and a necklace around her neck, ...And when the artist put his hand to painting the image, guided by the power of [Thekla’s] might, he painted a true image. After the image had been taken to him, upon seeing it, the lascivious priest recognized it was she; and...having stood up, he embraced the image and agreed that it was she. And he treasured the image in his own house, having come to believe in the message of the apostle [Thekla]. And the painting was passed on in succession by his descendants to the illustrious Achaios, a learned sophist, a Christian man.

And after his death the painting itself was viewed when the blessed Achaïos himself was buried. For at that time he was a guardian of the martyrion of the holy Thekla <and > having copied this portrait, he also personally gave it to those wanting it for a copy.¹⁴⁸

This account may be valuable only in arguing that the *Myrtle Wood* was perhaps written during the time when icons were under discussion and this episode was a construction to argue in their favour. On the other hand, it allows the possibility that from a very early time, when Thekla was eighteen “give or take a bit” (c. 47), there was a “true” representation of her.¹⁴⁹

Thekla in the Coptic Tradition

The Thekla tradition in Egypt is a vast subject, one admirably examined and addressed by Stephen Davis in his seminal work, *The Cult of St. Thekla: A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity*, in which he examines the archaeological, iconographical, material (including *ampullae*), onomastic, and textual evidence that bears witness to Thekla.¹⁵⁰ Since Davis' work is well known and easily accessible I will not reference it here in detail but only by way of elaboration. Other Thekla traditions, however, are less known and studies about them not as main stream as that of Davis so I will comment upon them below in greater detail.

Three unusual variations to the story of Thekla are contained in a Coptic synaxarium: 1) it is Thekla's father (absent from other traditions), rather than her mother, who takes her before the governor (and who eventually accepts Christ); 2) the story takes place in Nicomedia rather than Iconium and Pisidian Antioch; and 3) Paul sends Thekla to a specific city, namely Iconium, to preach.¹⁵¹

Thekla in the Syriac Tradition¹⁵²

At the outset of this section, I should note that the sixth-century Syriac manuscript is the most ancient of the extant texts of the *ATH*. It is also, according to Ramsay, only in the Syriac that Thekla's prayer in the arena is contained:

My Lord and my God, the Father of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, Thou art the helper of the persecuted, and Thou art the companion of the poor; behold Thy handmaiden, for lo, the shame of women is uncovered in me, and I stand in the midst of all this people. My Lord and my God, remember Thy handmaiden in this hour.¹⁵³

As Burris and Van Rompay have noted, evidence for the Syrian Thekla tradition is iconographically and epigraphically¹⁵⁴ meagre but textually rich. Much of the data is datable to the sixth century including the *Life of Febronia* with its explicit reference to the *ATH* and the Syrian-Orthodox patriarch Severus' homily on Thekla (*Oratio 97*). A letter from Severus (c. 511) to Solon, the metropolitan bishop of Seleucia, encourages him to be steadfast in the orthodox faith and directs him to Thekla's support.¹⁵⁵

But assuredly the honourable in virginity and first of the female martyrs, and skilled maker of these things, I mean the holy Thecla, will clothe you in such raiment to do honour to her vote concerning you.

Severus again extols Thekla in his hymn of Thekla in which he attributes her victories to the flame of Christ's love in her soul.¹⁵⁶

A *Hymn of Thekla* is contained in a section dedicated to "Holy Martyrs who were martyred among women" in a collection of hymns preserved by Jacob of Edessa (c. 674/5) that includes, according to Jacob, in the final note of what is thought to be his final redaction, 295 hymns of Severus as well as those by others. The *Hymn of Thekla*

(whether by Severus or another hymnographer contemporary to him) makes direct references to scenes from the *Ath*:

“The king shall delight in thy beauty.”¹⁵⁷ Christ who speaks in Paul—He who said, “I have come to put fire on the earth”—by inflaming with his love the soul of the holy virgin Thekla, He burned from her the bonds of fleshly brotherhood. He preserved her virginity in purity, He supported her in the combat of martyrdom. He quenched the fire and placed a muzzle and a bit in the mouth of carnivorous beasts. He rendered the idolatrous bondmaid an evangelist and apostolic,¹⁵⁸ preaching and proclaiming the word of life everywhere amid all dangers. By her prayers Our Savior, bestow upon men and women alike thoughts of chastity and Thy great mercy.¹⁵⁹

Burris and Van Rompay cite as another witness to the “prominent position” of Thekla in Syriac tradition the early-fifth-century Armenian version of the *Ath* that Conybeare (1896) edited.¹⁶⁰ Supported by Calzolari, he argued that it was based on a Syriac rather than Greek original. According to Calzolari, Thekla’s appearance in original Armenian literature dates from the latter part of the fifth century.¹⁶¹

There are four Syriac manuscripts now located in the British Museum that bear witness to that tradition. These four date from the sixth, tenth, tenth/eleventh, and end of the twelfth centuries. In 1902, Anton Baumstark divided these into two categories: 1) the first two to “a larger literary unit” known as the Syriac *Book of Women*¹⁶² which includes the stories of Ruth, Esther, Susanna, Judith and Thekla; and 2) the last two manuscripts which are found in larger collections of historical, martyrological and hagiographical texts. In addition to these manuscripts is a two-part collection (c. 598) made up of the complete book of Job, and the book of Daniel with the book of Thekla. Another composite manuscript, this one from the eighth century, includes Josephus’ destruction of

Jerusalem, III Maccabees, Ruth, Susanna, and a later addition of the beginning verses of Esther. The second part of this manuscript (also eighth century) contains the *Book of Women*, Esther Judith, Thekla, and Tobit (LXX). Note that in these texts, Thekla is grouped among Old Testament women who are remembered for their heroic behaviour.¹⁶³ As Burris and Van Rompay note, in Syriac tradition, there are essentially “three contexts in which the Thekla story has been transmitted:” 1) in the *Book of Women*, 2) in Daniel/Thekla pairings, and 3) in large hagiographical collections.¹⁶⁴

Catherine Burris describes the *Book of Women* as “a deliberately created, titled collection” that contains “a strategy of reading, constructing a meta-textual narrative that seeks to dictate the ways in which the component texts are understood.” Burris finds no evidence of a pre-existing Jewish *Book of Women* that groups Ruth, Esther, Susanna and Judith, and regards this as evidence that Thekla is not merely a later addition to the sixth-century Syriac *Book of Women*. Therefore, Burris argues, the Syriac *Book of Women* is a Christian collection—a Christian collection with four Jewish non-virginal women and Thekla—“a Christian book that appropriates Jewish figures for Christian use.”¹⁶⁵ Citing Thekla’s last place placement in the text, Burris understands her to be the “climactic figure” of the work, as the successor to Ruth, Esther, Susanna, and Judith and, by extension, as having achieved quasi-scriptural status. In this, she detects a note of “structural triumphalism” on the part of the author.¹⁶⁶

John the Stylite’s *Select Narrative of Holy Women* is contained in an eleventh-century Sinai palimpsest which includes the Old Syriac Gospels. Thekla is included in this group of holy women saints, many of whom, like Thekla, were virgin/martyrs, and several of whom assumed men’s clothing as a protective disguise.

Among Severus of Antioch's *Cathedral Homilies*, Homily 97 is dedicated to the protomartyr Thekla in which he paraphrases portions of the *ATH*, conceptualizes Thekla as an image of the Church, and draws a parallel between her sufferings and that of Daniel in the lion's den and also of that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. In two other homilies, he again makes the connection between the sufferings of Daniel and Thekla.¹⁶⁷

Further witness is borne to the Thekla tradition in pre-Islamic Persia by the *vita* of Febronia (c. 600), references to Thekla in the Manichean Psalm-Book (thought to have originated in Aramaic, of which Syriac is a derivative),¹⁶⁸ and her many Syriac namesakes (two of which were highly esteemed in the Christian community).¹⁶⁹ To this day Thekla is still a popular saint in Syria as was discussed, above, in "The Scope of the Cult of Thekla."

Thekla in the Ethiopic Tradition

As we have noted already, there are manuscripts of the *ATH* in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Armenian and Coptic. The most unusual version of Thekla's story, however, is rooted in the Ethiopic tradition¹⁷⁰ and shows some affinity with the Greek version.¹⁷¹ The Ethiopic "Book of Thekla" is preserved in two codical synaxaria of lives of saints (fifteenth and eighteenth century). The *Book of Thekla* is placed fifth in the series of sermons and martyrdoms in the earlier manuscript. In the eighteenth-century illustrated foliar synaxarium, the names Jesus, Christ, Paul, and Thekla (as well as the assumed-to-be owner of the book—a Walda Giyorgis) are most frequently highlighted in red. The two texts derive from different parents, with the later one being the superior in that while

not being a descendant of the earlier manuscript, it is a corrected and amplified version of the synaxarium.¹⁷²

These synaxaria include digressions from the traditional story of Thekla, and while they cannot be understood as another version, they are “a very free reworking of the story, with numerous omissions, transpositions, and interpolations.”¹⁷³ The preaching of Paul occupies almost a quarter of the text.¹⁷⁴ The story is set in Macedonia, which the author understands to be a city, rather than in Iconium. And, in this version, Paul and Thekla travel to Thessalonica rather than to Pisidian Antioch. As Goodspeed argues, the disappearance of all near-Asiatic place names of the traditional story—Iconium, Derbe, Lystra, Myra, Antioch—necessitates the association of the Ethiopic story of Thekla with some different missionary journey of Paul.¹⁷⁵

Some of the peculiarities of the Ethiopic version of Thekla’s story should be noted. Thekla’s fiancé (traditionally ‘Thamyris’) is named Tamerenos. He denounces Paul to the governor who (in a departure from other traditions) orders Paul to be burned. Paul somehow escapes death and is cast from the city. Thekla, persisting in her decision not to marry, is also brought before the governor and sentenced to be burnt. In this version, as she is led to the fire, she is “wonderfully adorned and beautiful, with hair reaching even to her heel and toes, and her color was like ivory.”¹⁷⁶ The governor orders that she be stripped of her adornment and clad in sackcloth. Despite this deprivation, various suitors stepped forward even at the eleventh hour. In agreement with other versions, having signed herself and committed herself to God, she entered the pyre and the fire is extinguished by rain. Unique to this tale, the thunder accompanying the rain

deafens the governor “because he had devised evil against the servants of God; and his ear festered and putrified and was deaf.”¹⁷⁷

After Thekla’s first bout with martyrdom, a new episode is injected in which she releases a woman from indebtedness to her, which is all the more admirable in that her own mother has just disinherited her. Thekla rejoins Paul, and they proceed to Thessalonica (rather than to Pisidian Antioch) after Paul reluctantly, at her request, cuts Thekla’s hair and girds her. Her mother (only referred to as “the mother of Thekla” and not “Theokleia” as in other versions) has Thekla seized and brought before yet another governor, a relative of the one who was struck with deafness. He must have heard of the plight of his relative because he resists the urgings of Thekla’s mother to apprehend her and says, “Thekla is hard to deal with; she is stronger than all,” yet, in the end, he gives orders for Thekla to be brought back from Thessalonica and thrown into a lions’ den. The lions are subdued when Thekla makes the sign of the cross after which she breaks into an orthodox *Magnificat* filled with scripture. The ensuing scene in which the governor, having spent a restless night, expects to find only her bones, is very like the story of Daniel and the lions’ den. The Ethiopic version ends with the conversion of the two governors who both lived “by the might of Jesus Christ forever and ever.”¹⁷⁸

The later Ethiopic manuscript of the two includes an addendum at this point that reads as follows:

And they both believed on the name of Jesus Christ. So, Lord, heal of disease of soul and body Thy servant, Walda Giyorgis (son of George); forever and ever *om* (to be understood as a meditation marker?) Amen and amen. And for me [the amanuensis] also who has written it—Thy servant, a sinner and wrongdoer—forgive my sin and bless.¹⁷⁹

The Medieval Thekla Tradition at Rome¹⁸⁰

Early medieval pilgrim itineraries and an alternate ending for the *ATH* that claims Thekla's burial was at Rome are the two main sources for evidence of the cult of Thekla at Rome. Cooper provides an overview of the cult at Rome and links its inception to the arrival of Cilician monastic refugees in the first half of the seventh century. She rejects an earlier date for Thekla's cult there arguing that Thekla was not enrolled in the Roman martyrology before but rather after that time. However, a Cilician monastery *ad Aquas Salvias* may have been established as early as the middle of the sixth century in Rome.¹⁸¹

Cooper examines textual evidence for what has been described as a wave of Cilician monastics whose removal to Rome in the seventh century may have been sparked by the progressive Arab expansion in southern Asia Minor as well by the continuing Monophysite controversy. These monastics may have felt greater affinity with their brethren in the West who supported the Diophysite position. Indeed, a significant number of Eastern "refugee" monastics, bishops, and presbyters assembled with the hundred-plus Western bishops at the mid-seventh-century Lateran Council designed to address the problem of monophysitism.

Another witness to the Thekla cult at Rome is the alternative, later expansion to the *ATH* that records Thekla's post-disappearance journey to Rome and subsequent burial there.¹⁸² It is in Greek rather than in Latin as might be expected. This version, according to Cooper, may build (I would add, depending upon interpretation) upon the Seleucian account provided by Ps.-Basil in the *Life*. Cooper regards the continuation of the earlier account in this later version as an indication of cooperation between the two cult sites, at Seleucia and at Rome. As a precedent for such cooperation she refers to the symbiotic

relationship sketched by Ps.-Basil in the *Miracles* between Thekla's cult at Hagia Thekla and the one at Dalisandos, as well as with that of Paul's at Tarsus.

Cooper suggests that this later ending to the Thekla story may well have been the product of the scriptorium of the Cilician monastery *ad Aquas Salvias*¹⁸³ that, according to early medieval pilgrim itineraries, was part of the Pauline cult complex located along the Via Ostiensis and Via Laurentia that included the underground chapel and columbaria of Thekla. This site was identified as such by Armellini and excavated in the 1870s and later by Professor Umberto Fasola in the 1960s; in the last few years, frescos of the apostles have been uncovered from layers of whitewash.¹⁸⁴ Three different seventh-century sources make mention of the church of St. Thekla in its relation to St. Paul's: the *Notitia ecclesiarum urbis Romae*, the *De locis sanctis martyrum*, and the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*. The latter mentions the church of Thekla in its relation to the gate of St. Paul and the church of *Aqua Salvia*.

Cooper acknowledges the speculative nature of her study; whether or not her synthesis of the sources is accurate, the sources themselves bear witness to a Thekla cult tradition in early medieval Rome.

Early-Twentieth-Century Interpretations of Thekla: Parallels with Classical

Literary and Mythological Figures

As the above survey of sources shows there is a long-standing tradition in regard to Thekla, her cult, image, and influence. From the inception of the tradition, beginning with the Church Fathers, Thekla has been appropriated and interpreted in various ways. An entire body of early-twentieth-century scholarship that did not accept a historical Thekla explained her as a successor to mythological figures.

Some of these early scholars, such as Radermacher,¹⁸⁵ characterized Thekla as a composite of pagan cult figures. Radermacher argued that Thekla bears similarities to the nymphs in that she was offered asylum by the earth when she fled from sexual assailants and, like the nymphs, she was associated with vegetation and grottoes and possessed gifts of prophecy and healing. Like Athena, Thekla was venerated on the heights of the citadel and was characterized as a virgin-warrior goddess. Like Artemis, Thekla sat on a golden throne.¹⁸⁶ Some scholars, including Radermacher, saw her as the female counterpart to Hippolytus whose disappearance is described in similar words to that of Thekla's. She is also sometimes likened to the healing heroes/gods Asclepius and Amphiaraos. The story of Androcles is similar to that of Thekla in that in neither account do the lions attack but instead provide protection for them from other wild animals. While these parallels may be drawn, Ps.-Basil, as is abundantly clear in both his introduction and first four miracles of his collection, did not envision Thekla as a *successor* but rather a *supplanter* of pagan divinities and chthonic heroes.

There are, however, strong parallels to be drawn between Thekla and the Cynic philosopher Hipparchia (c. 346). Both Methodius and Ps.-Basil present Thekla as well educated. In the *Symposium*, Thekla expounds upon philosophy. As Hipparchia fell in love with the words and life of Krates and would not pay attention to other suitors despite their wealth, high birth, or good looks, so Thekla was entranced by the words of Paul and his manner of life to the extent that she rejected her engagement with the noble Thamyris. According to Diogenes Laertius, Hipparchia left behind her comb and loom to follow Krates.¹⁸⁷ Similarly, Thekla sacrificed her jewellery and mirror to be able to be near Paul. Both Hipparchia and Thekla assumed men's clothing to accompany Krates and Paul,

respectively, in their travels. Such parallels with powerful women from antiquity combined with Thekla's authority to teach and to baptize have provided an impetus and touch point for scholarship on women's empowerment. In the next chapter, I will address the appropriation and appropriateness of Thekla as a role model for women's empowerment.

Notes to Chapter 2

⁷³ Aubineau (1975), 362.

⁷⁴ Tert. *De bapt.* 17 (CSEL 20.215) “Acta Pauli quae perperam scripta sunt...ad licentiam mulierum docendi tinguendique defendere...” has been interpreted by some to cast doubt on the person of Thekla. Instead it can be argued that he wished to suppress the role of women in baptizing and teaching by casting doubt on the Acta themselves, presenting them as a *pia fraus*.

⁷⁵ See Cooper (1995), 2, n. 3 for source studies and Hayne (1994) for an overview of references to Thekla by Church Fathers.

⁷⁶ Among the Church Fathers, Gregory of Nazianzus makes the most references to Thekla.

⁷⁷ The two Ps.-Cyprian prayers are preserved in the Latin but were originally written in Greek. They are cited in full in Cabrol and Leclercq (1920-1953), 12.2 2332-4. Thekla is cited once in each of the prayers. She is the only non-biblical or non-apocryphal person mentioned in the text with the exception of Nebuchadnezzar. Jacob, Daniel, Tobias, Sarah, and Raphael, Jonah, David, Daniel, Susanna, and Mary are among those cited in the prayers.

⁷⁸ Greg. Naz. *De vita sua* 548-9 (PG 37.1067).

⁷⁹ Thekla’s feast in the West was September 23 and, in the East, September 24. See MacDonald and Scrimgeour (1986), 152 for discussion of the panegyric. The panegyric refers to representations of Thekla on a triptych in the church and is the earliest recorded of all Christian triptychs. According to Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 393, the *Homily on Thekla* by Ps.-Chrysostom is considered to be one of the earliest independent accounts of the Thekla tradition.

⁸⁰ For *ampullae*, see Davis (2001), Appendix A, 195-200. For the medallion, see MacDonald and Scrimgeour (1986), 158.

⁸¹ Moschos, *Pratum spirituale*, 180 (PG 87. 3052B 4-8).

⁸² Malalas (1986), 405.

⁸³ As noted in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (1991).

⁸⁴ Cooper (1995), 3.

⁸⁵ Evag. Schol. 3.8.1-10.

⁸⁶ *Chronique de Séert* 288.176. And although it is commonly thought that he wrote a panegyric to Thekla, apart from Assemani’s reference in *Bibliotheca orientalis Clementino-Vaticana I*, Rome (1719), there is no supporting evidence, according to Pesthy (1996), 167. In the *Chronique de Séert*, Thekla is rendered as Taqlâ. Ramsay ([1927] 1969), 267, explains that in the early versions of the *Acta*, her name is Tekla and that it derives from *Takali* a cognate of the word *tekel* used in the story of King Belshazzar in the biblical book of Daniel and of the Arabic *dakalias*, all which refer to “balance.” As recorded in the *Chronique de Séert* c. 325, a St. Eugenie of Clysma had a sister named Taqlâ.

⁸⁷ See Cooper (1995), 3.

⁸⁸ The mid-fifth-century *Vitae Syncreticae* 8, describes Syncretica as the “genuine disciple of the blessed Thekla (τῆς μακαρίας Θέκλης γυνυσίαν μαθήτριαν). PG 28.1489C. The author, Ps.-Athanasius, writes that Thekla and Syncretica shared the same Saviour and and the same common Enemy. In his opinion, however, Thekla’s sufferings were milder because they were external, while Syncretica’s were “from within.” For an English translation, see Ps.-Athanasius, *The Life and Regimen of the Blessed and Holy Syncretica, Part One: The English Translation*, trans. Elizabeth Bryson Bongie, Toronto: Peregrina Publishing (rprnt: 2003, c. 1995).

⁸⁹ *Vita Febroniae* 591.19.13-16. “As Febronia goes forth to her martyrdom, Byrene her spiritual mother prays for her: “Lord Jesus Christ, who appeared to your servant Thekla in the guise of Paul, turn toward this poor girl at the time of her contest.”

⁹⁰ Syncretica 8 (PG 28.1489c. The anonymous author of the earlier *vita* of Olympias writes in Chapter One that “Olympias walked in the footsteps of this saint, Thekla, in every virtue of the divinely-inspired way of life.” For the other references, see Ashbrook-Harvey (1990) 53, n. 8 and 54, nn. 10-11.

⁹¹ Theodoret, *HR* 29.4 (PG 82.1283-1496).

⁹² Claudian, *Epig. Ad Jacob*, as cited by Glover (1901), 16. According to Glover, the epigram contains Claudian’s only known direct biblical references.

⁹³ August. *De civ. D.* 5. 26. English translation in *NPNF* S. 1, Vol. 2. “And therefore the poet Claudian, although an alien from the name of Christ...”

⁹⁴ Sulpicius Severus, *Dial.* 2.13 (PL 20.210).

⁹⁵ John of Damascus, *Hymn to Thekla, Ode 6*. Available at:

<http://www.aug.edu/augusta/iconography/hagiographies/hymnProtomartyrThekla.htm>

⁹⁶ Assemani, *B.O.* vol. iii, 323 as cited in *DECB* (1999), 955. According to Solomon of Bossora, the oration includes the prayer of Thekla for Tryphaena’s daughter Falconilla (who will be discussed below).

⁹⁷ For more detail see Albrecht (1986), 317-19, sect. 5.7.2.

⁹⁸ Aubineau (1975), 359f. The homily was wrongly attributed to Gregory Thaumaturgus. For the text, Aubineau cites J. Pitra, *Analecta sacra Spicilegio Solesmensi parata*, t. 4, Paris (1883), 412, and 168.

⁹⁹ Ambrose, *Ad Vercellensem ecclesiam* 34-6, *PL* 16.1250. For more on Thekla and the Church, see Pesthy (1996), 164-78.

¹⁰⁰ Golitzin (2002). This is from the menologue for Thekla by Symeon Metaphrastes *PG* 115.821-45. Thekla is celebrated in an illustrated Metaphrastic menologion for September. See London Additional 11870 f. 174v discussed by Walter (1981), 19 and Fig. 16.

¹⁰¹ Severus of Antioch, Sermon 97, (24 September, 516) Brière (1935) vol. XXV, 121-6 and vol. XXIX, 60. Pesthy (1996), 173-5. Ramsay refers to an epitaph of Aviricius Marcellus from 192 that describes the Church as “the Queen.” The epitaph refers to the education [Christ] the Shepherd had provided for him: “He sent me to Rome to see the mystic King and the Church, the Queen.” The text is discussed by Ramsay (1889), 265-72.

¹⁰² Ambrose, *De virginitate* 2.19.

¹⁰³ Epiph. *Adv. haeres.* 79.5.1-4. He refers to Thekla also in *Adv. haeres.* 78.16. The site of Hagia Thekla is alternately known as Ayatekla and Meriamlik which translated means “House of Mary.”

¹⁰⁴ On the possible derivation of Thekla’s name, see page 28 and note 86, above.

¹⁰⁵ See MacDonald and Scrimgeour (1986), 154.

¹⁰⁶ Davis (2001), Appendix D, 241-6.

¹⁰⁷ *Jer. Chron.* 329.

¹⁰⁸ Gr. Nyss. *Macr.* *PG* 46.964d. Macrina was her public name; Thekla her “secret name” that was revealed in a vision as her mother was giving birth. She dreamed three times that she was approached by the majestic figure of the Virgin Martyr Thekla who indicated that she was giving birth to a “second Thekla.”

¹⁰⁹ She and her mother lived out their lives in a convent at Tarsus after Illus’ execution. See Martindale, *PLRE* (1971), 1064; John Ant. fr. 214.11).

¹¹⁰ See Brock and Harvey (1998), 65, 78.

¹¹¹ *PICA* 62855. The cross is part of the Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine collection, no. 52.5.

¹¹² See *Mir.* 11.33-5.

- ¹¹³ See Mango (1972), 165. The account is from Theophanes Continuatus, ed. I. Bekker, *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae* (Bonn 1828-1897), 139ff.
- ¹¹⁴ Topping (1980), 370, n. 81. See also Janin (1969), 141.
- ¹¹⁵ Papadopoulos (1890), 253.
- ¹¹⁶ She is among a small group of Byzantine women composers that include her contemporaries—Martha the mother of the second Symeon Stylites; Theodosia; and Kassia who may have embraced the ascetic life after, on account of her quick wit, having been rejected as a potential wife by Michael III. A later woman composer is also honoured in this group, Palaeologina (c. fifteenth century).
- ¹¹⁷ This is the only extant hymn for the Theotokos composed by a woman. It is preserved in the *Theotokarion*, a collection of Byzantine hymnographers by Nikodemos Haioreites (Venice 1796).
- ¹¹⁸ *Θέκλα ἡ γλυκυστάτη Ἡχώ*. As cited by Topping (1980) who cites Choraites, (1965), 317.
- ¹¹⁹ Topping (1980), 353. According to Topping, 356, the kanon, composed to be sung at Tuesday vespers, is made up of nine odes consisting of one hundred ninety-eight verses.
- ¹²⁰ See Dagron (1978), 50, n.1 for discussion of origins of the cult of Thekla at Rome.
- ¹²¹ Thoumin (1929), 163-80 and Plates XVII-XXI.
- ¹²² Cyra and Marana, Egeria, and Gregory of Nazianzus, respectively.
- ¹²³ Jerome, *Ep. 108 to Eustochium*, especially sections 7-8, *LCL*.
- ¹²⁴ Kotting (1950), 156.
- ¹²⁵ *Mir.* 24.23-8.
- ¹²⁶ Amm. Marc. *Res Gestae* 22.8.24. For more on pheasants and the Phasis, see Lordkipanidze (2000), 33-4. Lordkipanidze cites several Latin authors with references to pheasants of the Phasis: Plin. (E). *HN* 10.132; Lactantius *Carmen de ave Phoenice* 5.144; Petronius *Satyricon* 93, 119.36-8; Columella *De re rust.* 8.8, 10; and the mid-fourth century Bishop Asterius of Amasea in regard to the purchase of expensive birds from the Phasis in his *Sermon on the Gospel of Luke* I. 169. Procopius *Caes. BP* 11.30, describes the fast-running Phasis River as being so fresh that even when it empties into the Black Sea, its water remains fresh for some distance. Dr. John Humphrey brought to my attention that both wild and fattened pheasants are listed in Diocletian's Wage and Price Control Bill of 301.
- ¹²⁷ Mart. *Ep.* 13.72. "I was transported first by Argo's keel; before that I knew nothing but Phasis."
- ¹²⁸ Kotting (1950), 146.
- ¹²⁹ For a more detailed study of the iconographical tradition in regard to Thekla, see Nauerth and Warns (1981); Warns (1986), 75-137.
- ¹³⁰ Nauerth and Warns (1981), 37, call this the "saint between animals" formula and see Thekla's animal fights as signifying a fight for the virtue of virginity—a fight against animal-like vice (p. 27). For a more detailed study see Hoek and Herrmann (2001), 212-49.
- ¹³¹ Walter (1995), 304-5. In the *PICA* 72883. British Museum, ME 1856.06-23. See also: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=62246&partid=1&searchText=ivory+casket+paul&fromADBC=ad&toADBC=ad&titleSubject=on&numpages=10&orig=%2fresearch%2fsearch_the_collection_database.aspx¤tPage=1
- ¹³² Pillinger suggests that the scene is inspired by the description in the *Life* rather than in the *Acta*. See Pillinger (2001), 213-237 and Pillinger (1999), 64.
- ¹³³ In *PICA* 57712.
- ¹³⁴ Hoek and Herrmann (2001), 224-5, n. 64, note that the term is repeated in texts about Thekla that are directly citing the *ATH*. See *ATH* 30, 35, 36 and *Life* 18.1.21 and 21.52. The two occurrences of the term in the *Life* are in the Antiochene episode and are disparagingly spoken by Alexander in regard to Thekla whom he wishes dead. He blames the (possible) death of Queen Tryphaena on Thekla. Thekla *ἡ θηριομάχος* now becomes Thekla the Queen-slayer—all the more reason she be eliminated! (My apologies if I have inadvertently taken this idea/sentence from another scholar without due credit.)

¹³⁵ Hoek and Herrmann (2001), 212-49. They cite (222 and n. 47) Salomonson and Stutzinger as earlier scholars who saw a connection with Thekla and the pottery. The authors, 217 and n. 25, note that the victory acclamations on the slipware are inscribed in Latin but that these formulas originated in the Greek world. According to Alan Cameron, as cited by Hoek and Herrmann, 218, by the first century the *vixit* acclamations were “fully established in the Latin-speaking world.” The authors, 229, regard the multiple examples of the slipware as evidence of Thekla’s stature in North African society, citing, as well, Augustine’s references to her in his sermons.

¹³⁶ See Nauerth (1987), 46-65.

¹³⁷ In the Nelson Gallery, Atkins Museum, Kansas City, MO, no. 48.10.

¹³⁸ *PICA* 146084.

¹³⁹ *PICA* 89781. Berlin. Frühchristlich-byzantinische Sammlung no. 3263.

¹⁴⁰ For the possible significance of the number of seven virgins, see Davis (2001), 166, n. 59.

¹⁴¹ The items are no. 618 and no. 629 in Dalton (1901). Also see Nauerth and Warns (1981), 22-4.

¹⁴² See Davis (2001), 152-73. In this scene Thekla is wearing a “loose-fitting greenish-gray” garment.

¹⁴³ Respectively, *PICA* 62855; 38116; 117447; 97597; 121938; 128073.

¹⁴⁴ du Bourguet (1968), 179 and plate 12.

¹⁴⁵ *PICA* 46771.

¹⁴⁶ *PICA* 77499. See the front piece of Festugière (1971).

¹⁴⁷ See Dagron (1974), 5-11. The link is in the person of Achaïos whom Ps.-Basil cites in the *Life* as the one who commissioned him to write the *Miracles*.

¹⁴⁸ *Myrtle Wood* 30-56.

¹⁴⁹ According to the text, this “true” representation of Thekla was actually an imagined (and idealized) portrayal.

¹⁵⁰ Davis (2001).

¹⁵¹ See <http://www.copticchurch.net/synaxarium/1_23.html#2> for Tout 23 The Commemoration of the Martyrdom of St. Thecla, and <http://www.copticchurch.net/synaxarium/11_25.html.#1> for Abib 25, The Departure of St. Thecla. In the Synaxarium, martyrdoms of Coptic namesakes of Thekla are also included: Thecla, the sister of the soldier St. Agabius (Messra 26); Thecla, the sister of Isi (Kiahk 8); and a third Thecla associated with the martyr Mouji (Abib 25).

¹⁵² I owe the bulk of this information to Burris and van Rompay (2002) and their subsequent article Burris and van Rompay (2003).

¹⁵³ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 403, 413. Ramsay argues that the prayer, not conforming to the pattern of a later hagiographical formula, can be regarded as genuine, in whole or in part. Thekla’s reference to “the shame of women” is that she has been stripped and is wearing only a cincture.

¹⁵⁴ Burris and van Rompay (2002), sect. 23 note that an ancient column east of Aleppo bears a supplicatory inscription to Thekla.

¹⁵⁵ As cited by Burris and van Rompay (2003) following Brooks (1903), 12.

¹⁵⁶ Severus, *Hymn* 160 in Brooks (1911), 620-1.

¹⁵⁷ A quotation from Ps. 45.12.

¹⁵⁸ Burris and van Rompay (2003), sect. 6, note the substantive adjective here. I suggest that its use indicates a hesitation on the part of the author to assign apostleship to Thekla.

¹⁵⁹ This quotation is taken from Burris and van Rompay (2003), sect. 5, who “largely follow” Brooks’ translation of the hymn, Brooks (1911), 620 [208]- 621 [209].

¹⁶⁰ Burris and van Rompay (2003), sect. 10.

¹⁶¹ See Calzolari (1996), 233-243 and Calzolari (1997), 39-49.

¹⁶² For more on the Syriac *Book of Women: Text and Meta-Text* see Burris (2007), 86-98.

¹⁶³ There are no NT women famous for their heroism.

¹⁶⁴ Burris and van Rompay (2002), sect. 15.

¹⁶⁵ Burris (2007), 90-1.

¹⁶⁶ Burris (2007), 90-1.

¹⁶⁷ Severus, *Cathedral Homilies* 71 and 75.

¹⁶⁸ See Albrecht (1986), 317-19, sect. 5.7.2, for a discussion of the Coptic Manichaean *Ψαλμοὶ Σαρακωτῶν* that names Thekla directly after the apostles and before any other women and reads as follows:

Thekla, the lover of God was led to the fire. She took on the sign of the cross. She stepped joyfully into the fire. However, she did not go in shame exposed in the midst of the throng. She was tossed to the bears. They released on her the lions. She was bound to the bulls. They set loose on her the seals. All this she bore. She was not defeated nor <gave way?> to these things. A crown it is for which she wishes; purity is that for which she struggles.

¹⁶⁹ Burris and van Rompay (2002), sect. 22, note Syrian women named Thekla associated with “venerable men:” 1) the mother of Rabban Hormizd, a “famous recluse of Northern Iraq” and 2) the sister of Mar Awgên who is thought “to have introduced Egyptian monasticism to Mesopotamia” and whose monastery, where he and his two sisters, Thecla and Stratonice are buried, is near Nisibis.

¹⁷⁰ Information in this section is based largely on the research of Goodspeed (1901).

¹⁷¹ Goodspeed (1901), 8f.

¹⁷² Goodspeed (1901), 6-7.

¹⁷³ Goodspeed (1901), 8.

¹⁷⁴ The Ethiopic text extensively incorporates language from the gospel and epistles of John according to Goodspeed (1901), 28 n. d.

¹⁷⁵ Goodspeed (1901), 26.

¹⁷⁶ Goodspeed (1901), 31.

¹⁷⁷ Goodspeed (1901), 31.

¹⁷⁸ Goodspeed (1901), 35.

¹⁷⁹ Goodspeed (1901), 35.

¹⁸⁰ The information for this section draws primarily from Cooper (1995), 1-23.

¹⁸¹ Cooper (1995), 16.

¹⁸² See above, note 15. According to Cooper (1995) 13, n. 32: Variant ending to the *APTh* in mss. A (Parisinus graecus 520, saec. XI), B (Parisinus graecus 1454, saec. X), and C (Parisinus graecus 1468, saec. XI) and text in Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta* (1891), 270-1.

¹⁸³ The proceedings of the seventh-century Lateran Council identified the *ad Aquas Salvias* monastery as “the monastery of the Cilicians.” Cited by Cooper (1995), 16, n. 42: I. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* vol. X (Florence 1764), col. 903.

¹⁸⁴ Armellini (1889), 343-353 and Fasola (1964 and 1970).

¹⁸⁵ See Radermacher (1916).

¹⁸⁶ An epithet for Artemis is the “gold-throned” (*chrysothronos* at *Iliad* 9.533) and whose handmaid Thekla is mistakenly thought to be by the pagan priest in the *Myrtle Wood*. See Hom. *Il.* 1.611 for *chrysonothos* as an epithet for Hera.

¹⁸⁷ Diog. Laert. 6.7.

CHAPTER 3:

THEKLA AS A ROLE MODEL FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?

In such a kaleidoscope of cultural images, as discussed in the previous chapter, how should Thekla be perceived? As a Christianized chthonic *daemon*¹⁸⁸ or hero, as an inheritor of Athena's warrior-goddess cult, as a legendary saint, as an *imitatio Mariae* or *Christi*, as a pagan philosopher or as something else entirely?

Feminist Scholarship on Thekla

Dunn, in his article on women's liberation and the *Acts of Paul*, cites Burrus, Carlé, Davies, and MacDonald, the major feminist scholars in regard to the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (hereafter designated as AAA) as sharing a "unanimous conclusion that the texts attest to women's liberation in early Christianity." Dunn challenges Virginia Burrus on a particular point by asking, "How could Burrus ignore or miss such details? One senses that Burrus has come to the text with a prior agenda."¹⁸⁹ He continues:

The desire to relate the *Acts of Paul* [and the *Acts of Thekla*] and other *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* to concerns relevant to twentieth-century feminism leads the authors to their consensus. This is also the bane of the consensus, since the authors impose on the text contemporary feminist thinking. The documents need to be researched on their own terms without the unwarranted apposition of contemporary ideology.¹⁹⁰

It is interesting that feminist scholars have chosen to champion the AAA and, in particular, have adopted Thekla as their patron saint, seeing her as a "sacred androgyne" suggesting that it is her very "betwixt and betweenness," her refusal to make the transition from the bisexual state of childhood to womanhood and choosing to remain

effectively a pre-adolescent female/male that secures women's equality with men in early Christianity and, in turn, women's place in the Church today.¹⁹¹ Schulenburg cites Pierre Delooz's notion that one is only a saint "for others" as well as "by others" and that the value of sanctity is situated in the collective memory.¹⁹² It is my intent in this section to consider the feminist claim in regard to Thekla and her suitability as presented in the *ATH* and in the *Miracles* as a saint for those who embrace radical feminism.

Perceiving her to be the proto-type of empowerment, feminist scholars promote Thekla on several counts—one being female solidarity in the *ATH*. They see Tertullian's censure (*De bapt.* 17) of the *APTh* as evidence for the subjection and suppression of women in the early Church. Thekla's tonsure and "permanent" transvestism are cited as hallmarks of her androgyny in her bid to rise above the limitations of her sex. They enthusiastically describe the community of women who gathered at Hagia Thekla as rejecting traditional roles and responsibilities. Davies, in the *Revolt of the Widows*, concludes that the *AAA* "are evidence of a rebellion within the Christian church as well as a rebellion of women against their husbands."¹⁹³ Of particular note to these scholars is the removal of Thekla's followers from the male presence.¹⁹⁴

According to Davies, the *APTh* were written by a woman, for women and represent women in rebellion to the church.¹⁹⁵ Stephen J. Davis states that in both Egypt and Asia Minor, the cult of St. Thekla remained closely linked with communities of women for whom the example of Thekla served as a source of empowerment and as a cause of controversy.¹⁹⁶ Dagron notes an underlying sense of feminine solidarity attached to the story of Thekla.¹⁹⁷ Certainly such a solidarity is evident in the narrative of the Antiochene portion of the *ATH* in which even pagan women and a lioness are numbered

among Thekla's supporters and in which women are presented as consistently good, and men as consistently evil.¹⁹⁸

M. Aymer, however, challenges the feminist argument derived from the Antiochene portion by demonstrating that these scholars ignore a parallel community in the *ATH* comprised "of dominant males and submissive but passionate females." Aymer notes that juxtaposed with the scene at Antioch, in the Iconium passage of the text, men present rational arguments while women are silent actors, and that all the "characters—antagonists, protagonists, even the chorus—are paired heterosexually."¹⁹⁹ This portion of the *ATH* is mixed in gender and decidedly male dominated. She notes that the two passages differ theologically and christologically as well. Aymer accounts for the dichotomy by suggesting that the Iconium and the Antiochene passages are products of two older oral narratives originating from two different communities with contrasting memberships, agendas and worldviews, combined into the *ATH* by a redactor. In Aymer's opinion, the *makarisms* of Paul and the testimony of Demas (vs. 5, 12) in the *ATH* suggest an audience of mixed gender.

Thekla did indeed appeal to an audience of both men and women and the patristic authors did cite Thekla as a role model of virginity, martyrdom, and orthodoxy. The survey of the primary sources attesting to the high esteem accorded to Thekla should raise some question as to the feminist interpretation of Tertullian's comments regarding her.²⁰⁰ Perhaps, as Dunn, Hayne, and Boughton argue, Tertullian was addressing the spurious nature of the work, considering it a *pia fraus* rather than censuring the character of Thekla.²⁰¹ This same reasoning addresses the feminist argument that the *ATH* was excluded from the canon due to chauvinism.²⁰² If the *ATH* was considered problematical

in that it “pretended to contain a level of historical and doctrinal truth and apostolic authority that it did not possess” (rather than the character of Thekla being called to account), then the feminist claim that Thekla stands as a model of feminine freedom in direct opposition to the Church Fathers does not hold.

Thekla and Transvestitism

Despite the Church Fathers’ frequent references to Thekla as one model of orthodoxy, claims in regard to Thekla as a proto-feminist persist. As examples of Thekla’s liberation, feminist scholars point to the stripping away of the feminine in the *APTh*:²⁰³ first Thekla uses her jewels and mirror to bribe the jailer to allow her access to Paul (4.10-11); later, in some versions, as they travel to Antioch, after Paul’s complaint that her beauty attracts unwanted attention (6.12), she cuts her hair;²⁰⁴ still later she exchanges her *chiton* for male clothing, *ependytes*, when she travels in mixed company to Myra in search of Paul (9.25).²⁰⁵ Is it not irresponsible to construct a theory of transvestism in regard to Thekla based solely upon passages from the *ATh* that record only the initial portion of her faith journey?

But even if we were to focus only on that period in her life, the account of her appearance recorded in the *Myrtle Wood* would also have to be taken into consideration: upon taking up residence at Seleucia when she was eighteen years old, “give or take a bit,” she was wearing earrings and a necklace. Not only is she not described as wearing manly attire, she is not even dressed poorly as one might expect an ascetic to be—but is bedecked with jewellery.

The assumption of male clothing, at least in Thekla’s case and perhaps in the case of other early Christian women who have been linked with transvestism by scholars, may

merely have been borne from necessity in a calculated effort to avoid unwanted advances from the opposite sex. The male clothing may have served temporarily as a disguise. Brit Berggren has noted that transvestism may be based on a practical and occasional need and does not necessarily indicate a permanent state.²⁰⁶ Dunn writes, “Cross dressing is a common literary motif and Thecla’s action may have little or no theological significance beyond simply avoiding detection.”²⁰⁷ Or donning men’s clothing may, on the other hand, reflect these women’s decision to step outside the traditional roles for women and to embrace an occupation traditionally associated with men. Hypatia sometimes wore men’s clothing as well.²⁰⁸ In *Mir.* 14.39-41, in which Thekla, specifically described as “dressed as a virgin and as the rule for the holy handmaids of Christ,” is engaged in explaining the fundamental doctrines of Christianity to the unbeliever Hypsistios, she is wearing dark clothing, specifically a purple mantle. In the *Martyrdom of Euphemia*, we read that “The Virgin [Euphemia] stood in a dark tunic and cloak, the sign of philosophy.”²⁰⁹ Certainly, in the Graeco-Roman worldview, virginity and *gnosis* were closely linked. Indeed, virginity might be regarded as a criterion for *gnosis*.²¹⁰

The feminist scholars have missed that after her trials at Antioch, the governor ordered that Thekla’s clothing be restored to her (*Life* 23. 4-5):

The governor orders her to be clothed with her accustomed (*εἰθισμένοις*) garments and to resume (*ἀπολαβεῖν*) the appearance befitting (*πρέποντα*) a respectable and chaste woman.

Then, two chapters later (*Life* 25), after having spent time instructing Queen Tryphaena and her household in the Christian faith and having baptized some of them, she prepares to go to Myra to reconnect with Paul. We read that at that time, as she leaves Antioch,

“she changes back into a more masculine costume” (πρὸς τὸ ἀνδρικώτερον μεταμπισχομένη πάλιν).²¹¹ In these two examples, note the simple but significant words “resume” and “back.” These few short lines alone negate any argument for permanent transvestism in regard to Thekla, but let us continue to examine other evidence.

In regard to the span of Thekla’s life that must be considered in determining her manner of dress, the account in the *Myrtle Wood* is instructive:

[Thekla] was, then, eighteen years old when she heard the teaching of Paul, and after her journeying and her ascetic life she lived for seventy-two years more, and at ninety years she died to the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit forever and ever world without end. Amen.²¹²

That account is supported by the closing lines of the *ATH*:

Thus suffered that first Martyr and Apostle of God, and Virgin, Thecla; who came from Iconium at eighteen years of age; afterwards, partly in journeys and travels, and partly in a monastic life in the cave, she lived seventy-two years; so that she was ninety years old when the Lord translated her.

A thorough examination of the *ATH* and the *Life & Miracles* for references in regard to Thekla’s attire is required before any legitimate hypothesis can be put forth.

Initially, *chiton* referred to men’s clothing while, later, it applied to women’s as well. In our text, it is referred to as a piece of *women’s* clothing that she laid aside in favour of that of men’s. In the *Life*, Thekla, upon learning that Paul is at Myra, leaves Antioch:

...changing back into a more masculine costume so that she might hide her radiant youthfulness [beauty] with a disguise...(πρὸς τὸ ἀνδρικώτερον μεταμπισχομένη πάλιν, ὥστε ἐπικρύπτει τῷ σχήματι τὴν ἐπιλάμπουσαν ὥραν αὐτῆς).²¹³

The corresponding episode in the *APTh* reads as follows:

...and, having crafted her chiton into an outer garment, in the guise of a man she went to Myra... (καὶ ῥάψασα τὸν χιτῶνα εἰς ἐπενδύτην σχήματι ἀνδρικῶ ἀπηλθεν ἐν Μύριοσς...).²¹⁴

The feminist argument is based primarily on Thekla's assumption of men's clothing. There are three references to Thekla's apparel in the *Miracles*—long after her travelling days had ended.

Miracle 12. 28-9

She took the corner of the *ιματίον* cloak that covered her head and the rest of her body...

The *ιματίον* does not give further insight, except that it covered her head—a fact that suggests a woman's garment.

Miracle 12.95-9

The Martyr stood before me in the form of a young girl with a white, threadbare cloak (*τριβωνίῳ*) that went round from her back and crossed her breasts and had been pinned at the other <opposite> shoulder with a brooch (*ἐμπεπορπημένῳ*).²¹⁵

Miracle 14. 39-41

The Martyr approached the sick man...in her own form and not in some other shape—a young girl, slim and not very tall...the radiance...of her body glistened under the dark clothing (*φαιοῖς ἱματίοις*) and seemed to shine like the sun through a delicate, purple mantle (*ἐκ τινος ἀλουργοῦ τε καὶ λεπτοῦ παραπετάσματος*).

Nothing definitive can be learned in regard to gender from the clothing terms in these three passages. In two of the passages, however, Thekla is specifically described as a young girl and as wearing a cloak fastened at the shoulder by a brooch. As will be

discussed below, in another text, Thekla is wearing a distinctly female garment that is fastened at the shoulder with a brooch. One scholar notes that while “the narrative we have [i.e. the *APTh* and, subsequently the *Life & Miracles*] apparently approves and indeed praises this transgression [that of choosing a severely ascetic Christianity against the dominant cultural norms] as gender transcendence”—a point that is highly questionable—“the narrative as we have it also underscores Thekla’s gender, a dynamic that persists in multiple interpretations of her story.”²¹⁶ Try as they might, feminist scholars cannot erase or explain that dynamic away.

Intriguingly, something of what Thekla was wearing at the time of her disappearance, at the end of her life, is recorded in the closing lines of the alternate version to *APTh* (11.13/ line 53) and in the *Myrtle Wood* (line 192). According to these accounts, as Thekla disappeared into the rock, her pursuers laid hold and ripped off part of her *maphorion*.²¹⁷ A *pharos* was a cloak or mantle typically worn over a *chiton* (and sometimes used as a shroud or pall). Nicetas of Paphlagonia wrote of this same episode that Thekla disappeared into the rock leaving a tip of her garment (*τὸ τῆς ἐπωμίδος περὶ γυίου*) as a witness.²¹⁸ The *ἐπωμίς* was part of a woman’s tunic, specifically the part that would be fastened at the shoulder with a brooch.²¹⁹ Symeon Metaphrastes, in his paraphrase of version II of the *APTh*, substitutes the word *omophorion* for *maphorion*.²²⁰ The prefix *omo-* indicates untanned leather or, figuratively, coarseness. At the time of her disappearance, then, Thekla was wearing a leather or, perhaps, coarse cloak that was typically worn over a *chiton*. Recall that in Thekla’s early travels with Paul she specifically exchanged her *chiton* for male clothing. If this line of reasoning is accepted, then, at the end of her life, as she flees her attackers, Thekla is presented as wearing

women's clothing. If this be the case, it cannot be argued that she was a permanent transvestite and, in turn, the feminist argument is rendered otiose on that point.

Male Presence

Let me now turn to the claim that both Thekla and her followers eschewed the male presence.²²¹ This seems the oddest claim of all considering the impressive dossier of material that argues to the contrary. In biblical tradition, Jesus' close associates included both men and women. Paul counted both men and women among his *synergoi*.²²² Thekla's absolute devotion to Paul clearly demonstrates that she was unconcerned with escaping male leadership.²²³ Shortly after her conversion, during the formative stage of her faith, she traveled with a mixed-gender group.²²⁴ Egeria enthusiastically relates that at Hagia Thekla, at the time of her visit in 384, there were innumerable monastic cells for men and women and that there were both monks and apotactites, *tam viris quam feminis*.²²⁵

Ps.-Basil, in *Mir.* 44, lists by name the men and women who were associated with the religious community at Hagia Thekla and of them he writes:

...the Martyr [Thekla] publicly recognized many men as they lived to the pinnacle of excellence, and <as well> she thoroughly trained many women who have adopted the same zeal...For what could anyone say is better: concerning these people, on the one hand, than to be under the direction of such a leader and to be trained by her in asceticism; and concerning the Martyr, on the other hand to take care of and to lead this group in comparison with which each individual female and male alike, the entire cosmos has no equal?²²⁶

Additionally, it is clear that men as well as women came as suppliant and pilgrims to Hagia Thekla. Gregory of Nazianzus enjoyed the seclusion of Hagia Thekla.²²⁷ Both men

and women were beneficiaries of Thekla's miracles. In the *Miracles*, men as well as women are called upon as witnesses to attest to the veracity of the miracles (e.g. Modestos, *Mir.* 19; Sosanna, *Mir.* 46).

A subtle witness to the presence of men in the community of Hagia Thekla is attested in the miracle concerning the married and illiterate Xenarchis. Ps.-Basil relates that

A certain one of the pious <from Hagia Thekla>, whether of the men or of the women I cannot say, with a book in hand, gave it as a gift to her.²²⁸

It is clearly irrelevant to Ps.-Basil whether the gift-giver was male or female. If males were *not* part of the composition of the community at Hagia Thekla and if the gift-giver were male, would that not have been a significant detail to note? As it is, the gender of the messenger is dismissed by Ps.-Basil as insignificant which indicates the normalcy of the male presence at Hagia Thekla. If the textual evidence is not sufficiently persuasive in regard to the male presence at Hagia Thekla, archaeological evidence confirms: the remains of a young man have been discovered in a rough grave at the south side chamber of the Cave Church at Hagia Thekla.²²⁹

Even in the collective memory of the Thekla tradition, St. Thekla was often paired with male saints. At Konya, Thekla's native Iconium, there are the twin peaks St. Philip and St. Thekla. Thekla is also sometimes associated with St. Konon, another first-century personality, who was from Bidana which lies between Iconium and Hagia Thekla.²³⁰ In Justianopolos, modern day Galata, the two churches, St. Konon and St. Thekla, are cited as being situated near each other by John Malalas.²³¹ In Egypt, St. Thekla is sometimes paired with St. Menas on *ampullae* and pottery, and in iconography.²³²

Women's devotion to Thekla at Hagia Thekla cannot in any way be construed to have developed in isolation from men.²³³ Thekla served a heterogeneous clientele. The hagiographic-gendered partnerships reinforce, as Wagner-Hasel would say, the *relation* rather than the *separation* of the sexes at Hagia Thekla and in the Thekla tradition.²³⁴

Marriage and family ties are affirmed in several of the miracles: in a response to a wife's fervent prayers, Thekla effected the conversion of the husband to orthodox Christianity (*Mir.* 14); Thekla restored the beauty of Kallista so that she could regain the favour and the bed of her husband (*Mir.* 42); Thekla sent a copy of the Gospel to Xenarchis, an illiterate married woman, who "was pleasing to the Virgin though she was married" and enabled her to read (*Mir.* 45); when wedding plans went awry, Thekla came to the rescue (*Mir.* 21); Thekla turned the unfaithful Vitianos "to hate fornication and to love the beautiful and just [bonds] of marriage" (*Mir.* 20). Although Thekla rejected marriage for herself, she protected the institution of marriage.²³⁵ Thekla did not promote the rebellion of wives against their husbands, as feminist scholars would have us believe,²³⁶ but, to the contrary, she actively worked to restore marriages.

In this section, I have noted evidence that suggests Thekla was not a permanent transvestite, that neither she nor her followers eschewed the male presence, and that the cult did not demand a severing of marital or familial ties. Far from being the embodiment of feminist freedom and empowerment, Thekla, although a powerful person in God, was characterized as supporting traditional and orthodox Christian values of the early Church. This leads one to question her appropriateness as a champion for feminist scholars.²³⁷ This raises the question as to who Thekla was, in a historical sense: a fabrication, a *fabula tota*,²³⁸ a feminist fantasy, or a historical heroine?

Thekla's Personality

It is significant that Thekla's personality displays little change between the *ATH* and the *Miracles* although the texts are separated by three centuries. She displays courage and fearlessness in the face of oppression. As noted already, she is characterized as a "beastfighter" in the *ATH* and in the *Life*.²³⁹ In Antioch, to repulse the advances of Alexander, the Syriarch, she tears the crown from his head and casts it to the ground.²⁴⁰ In the *Symposium* of Methodius, however, Thekla does behave in a more "saintly" fashion. Unlike later *vitae* and *miracula* in which the private virtues of saints are enumerated, comparatively little is said in regard to those of Thekla. She never prays in the *Miracles*. Ps.-Basil does present Thekla as "truly a helper," one eager to assist, compassionate toward the poor and oppressed, a good listener, gracious and good-willed, a lover of silence and solitude, and as the "O So Gentle One." In appearance, she is presented as a lovely, unarmed, young maiden.

Those characteristics and attributes, however, are far outweighed by more aggressive ones. Dagrón notes that Thekla is characterized by differing roles and also by varying registers of emotion. Schulenburg has noted that it is expected of holy heroines that they be atypical and engage in paranormal exploits. Thekla fits the bill. Pesthy makes the following observations in regard to Thekla's character:

She is hot-tempered and passionate, and acts accordingly.
One can say that in certain cases she overreacts, a fact that
may have added to her popularity.²⁴¹

Thekla is characterized by Ps.-Basil as a dynamic, animated and active, rather than a mild, submissive, self-effacing saint. She is a "militant saint" compared to a "private

saint.”²⁴² This aspect of the *Miracles* may have militated against a broad reception of the text.

In *Mir.* 16, Thekla is identified as a helper, ally, and protector. She installs herself as a fortress against the pagan gods of Seleucia. In the *Miracles*, she is said to conquer in extremely manly fashion, throw firebrands and raise a war cry, perform powerful and unsurpassable feats, comport herself in general-like fashion, drive in a fiery chariot, pilot a storm-tossed ship, stand on mountain ridges as she rains down fire on the enemy, and threaten punishment. When upset, she is described as having a fierceness of appearance and expression, as pacing up and down the city or in her sanctuary, crying out, threatening punishment, setting her hand in battle, and fixing a terrifying gaze upon those who meet with her displeasure.

Dagron notes that Thekla’s true temperament is revealed *post mortem*, or perhaps he would be more true to the text if he were to say post-disappearance. He writes that “les colères de Thècle font peur” and enumerates the several miracles in which her rage is unleashed.²⁴³ Johnson sees her as a “divine avenger” and categorizes a number of the miracles as acts of vengeance.²⁴⁴ Ps.-Basil, himself, is often gripped with fear as he records Thekla’s actions even to the point of consciously changing direction in his narrative:

So come now, let us move on...from the more somber miracles to the brighter ones, from the more severe to the more kindly, so that we, tense from fear, may lift up our spirits and be warmed again by some sweeter and gentler accounts.²⁴⁵

Ps.-Basil sums it all up with his concise but compelling comment: She is like a Fury.²⁴⁶

Thekla as Apostle, Martyr, and Virgin

Ps.-Basil addresses Thekla in the *Miracles* as “Thrice-blessed One.”²⁴⁷ The term “thrice-blessed” refers to Thekla in three different aspects—those of Virgin, Martyr, and Apostle. Apostle refers to Thekla’s authority and divine assignment; Virgin, to her manner of life and intercessory work; and Martyr, to her miracles and thaumaturgical activity. These three aspects also represent three stages in the early church—the apostolic age, the era of the martyrs and, finally, that of the ascetic movement in which virginity was so highly esteemed. Thekla lived during each of these stages (c. 30-120). It is in the closing chapter of the *Life* that this triune picture of Thekla is first presented when Ps.-Basil addresses her as “O Virgin, Martyr, and Apostle.”²⁴⁸ This formula repeats itself with slight variation in the *Miracles*²⁴⁹ and also in the *Myrtle Wood*.

Thekla as Martyr/ Protomartyr

“Martyr” is the most frequently employed epithet for Thekla in the *Miracles*. It is used over sixty times. Although Thekla was not martyred, she was prepared to be as she endured the “martyrial contests.” Corrington Streete characterizes them as a “series of near misses” and as “virtual martyrdoms.”²⁵⁰ In the *Miracles*, when asked, Thekla identifies herself as the Martyr rather than the Virgin or the Apostle: “I am Thekla, the Martyr of Christ” (*Mir.* 14).

The opening chapter of the *Life* refers to Thekla as a martyr:

At this time, in turn, Thekla also came on the scene not after many male and female martyrs but second immediately after the apostles and the martyr Stephen—whom the Word of Truth acknowledges also as first—but she is the first—so that Stephen heads the list of all men...and Thekla [heads the list] of women.²⁵¹

Although Ps.-Basil refers to Thekla as the “great Martyr Thekla” (*ἡ μεγάλη μάρτυς* and *τῆ ἁγία μεγαλομάρτυρι* (*Mir.* 4. 44, 53) and as the first among women martyrs, he does not use the term *protomartyr* in the text. It is, however, included in the title to the *Miracles*. The anonymous author of the *Myrtle Wood*, who also advances the triune formula of Thekla, does refer to Thekla as *protomartyr* (as will be discussed below in the section entitled “Thekla as Martyr/Protomartyr). Isidore of Pelusium (d. 450), a contemporary of Ps.-Basil, is generally thought to have been the first to call Thekla “*protomartyr*.”²⁵² An earlier reference to Thekla as both apostle and *protomartyr* is contained in the title to Ps.-Chrysostom’s homily about Thekla, but that, of course may be a later addition to the text.²⁵³ Evagrius also used the term in his account of Thekla’s appearance to Emperor Zeno.²⁵⁴ Numerous Byzantine writers make reference to Thekla as *protomartyr*.²⁵⁵ The inscription *πρωτομάτυ(ρος) Θέκλ(ης)* from Isauria (c. fifth to sixth centuries) bears witness to its common currency.²⁵⁶

According to Bowersock, the term *protomartyr* does not appear in the Bible and the biblical use of the word “martyr” (even in relation to Stephen or Jesus) means “witness” rather than “martyr.” References to Stephen *qua* martyr²⁵⁷ arise in the fourth century²⁵⁸ and Jesus is called *protomartyr* by Gelasius of Cyzicus in the fifth century. Bowersock regards the term *protomartyr* as “part of post-Constantinian theology” and as emerging after *μάρτυς* came to mean “martyr.” Noting the late-antique confusion as to whether Stephen, Thekla, or Jesus, should bear the title, Bowersock is of the opinion that Jesus has the best claim.²⁵⁹

In the *Life & Miracles*, the term *martyr*, unlike those of virgin and apostle, includes the notion of “action” in its semantic field. Three times in the text the question is

asked: “And what did the Martyr <do>?” (*Τί οὖν ἡ μάρτυς;*).²⁶⁰ As Martyr, Thekla made visitations²⁶¹ (while sometimes appearing in the epiphanies as a virgin as in *Mir.* 14), prescribed cures (*Mir.* 39), was the true helper and healer of mankind (*Mir.* 11 and 25), healed the sick (*Mir.* 12 and 25), extended grace, aid, and forgiveness (*Mir.* 8 and 23), displayed compassion (*Mir.* 43), functioned as the leader of the ascetic chorus (*Mir.* 44), reversed circumstances (*Mir.* 36), distributed gifts at her *panegyris* (*Mir.* 33), rescued cities (*Mir.* 26), performed miracles (*Mir.* 24), directed Ps.-Basil to his work (*Mir.* 10), and received prayers (*Mir.* 10). The Martyr “observes everything and watches over everything” (*Mir.* 21) with her “powerful and unsleeping eye” (*Mir.* 34). She is also referred to as a helper (*ἀρωγόν*), ally (*σύμμαχον*), and protector (*ἐπίκουρον*) (*Mir.* 16.27).²⁶² Both the church²⁶³ and the miracles²⁶⁴ are referred to as the Martyr’s (rather than the Virgin’s or the Apostle’s).

Overlap Between Virgin and Martyr

The different aspects of Thekla are not disconnected. The anonymous *Life of Olympias* provides a summary of Thekla’s story and notes in the same sentence the two aspects of Thekla as Virgin and Martyr:

Among them was Thekla, a citizen of heaven, a martyr who conquered in many contests, the holy one among women who despised wealth, hated the sharp and transitory pleasures of this world, refused a pecunious marriage and confessed that she would present herself a chaste virgin to her true Bridegroom.²⁶⁵

Thekla’s annual festival is noted as both the festival of the Virgin—in honour of the Martyr (29)—and the festival of the Martyr (33). With two exceptions, it is

exclusively the Martyr who is said to make an appearance/visitation. Twice, however, Thekla appears in the aspect of Virgin.²⁶⁶

This overlap between Virgin and Martyr was evident early in the textual tradition in Ps.-Chrysostom's panegyric to Thekla. While he was speaking, the preacher-panegyrist and his congregation must have been looking at a representation of Thekla:

It seems to me if I were seeing today this blessed maiden in a mirror pictured by memory; she is holding in one hand the crown for her victory over lusts, in the other the crown for her victory over dangers; with this hand she is offering to the Ruler of the universe her virginity, with the other her martyrdom. Because she possessed virginity, too, and this is, when we look at it closer, a great martyrdom before the martyrdom.²⁶⁷

Thekla as Virgin

As early as perhaps eighteen years of age, Thekla as Virgin arrived in the area of Seleucia and proceeded to oust Sarpedon (*Mir.* 1). In the aspect of Virgin, Thekla spent time in her bridal chamber (*Mir.* 23), received honour at the *panegyris* at Dalisandos (*Mir.* 26), was supplicated for protection as the “wonderfully victorious and Christ-bearing virgin” (καλλίνικε καὶ χριστοφόρε παρθένε) (*Mir.* 27.8), knew how to help those in need (*Mir.* 28), received thank offerings dedicated to her (*Mir.* 13), hosted citizens of Tarsus (*Mir.* 4), and was committed to the protection of cities (*Mir.* 6). The Virgin's strength, astuteness, and good will are cited (*Mir.* 13). Twice Ps.-Basil directs his supplications for protection to the Virgin.

The word *parthenos* occurs in the *Life* twenty-five times, fourteen of which refer to her in her aspect as Virgin of God.²⁶⁸ In other texts, Thekla is referred to as a “perpetual-virgin” (ἀειπάρθενος). Dio Cassius uses the term in describing the Vestal

Virgins (*αἱ ἱέρειαι αἱ ἀειπάρθενοι*).²⁶⁹ Philo uses the term many times in his writings. In the Christian domain *ἀειπάρθενος* came to be used formulaically for Mary the Mother of God regardless of genre in liturgy, history, patristics, etc.²⁷⁰ The term is also attested for individual women on Christian inscriptions.²⁷¹ Ps.-Basil, however, does not use the term *ἀειπάρθενος* either for Mary or for Thekla.

Gregory of Nazianzus refers to Athanasius of Alexandria's connection to "the holy and beautiful-virgin (*καλλιπαρθένης*) Thekla."²⁷² Gregory of Nyssa also refers to Thekla as a virgin.²⁷³

Perhaps the best synthesis of these two aspects of Thekla—Martyr and Virgin—is found in the panegyric to Thekla by Ps.-Chrysostom.²⁷⁴

It seems to me as if I were seeing today this blessed maiden in a mirror pictured by memory; she is holding in one hand the crown for her victory over lusts, in the other the crown for her victory over dangers; with this hand she is offering to the Ruler of the universe her virginity, with the other her martyrdom. Because she possessed virginity, too. And this is, when we look at it closer, a great martyrdom before the martyrdom...All this had made the virginity of the blessed virgin into a great martyrdom.²⁷⁵

But Thekla was not only the Virgin and the Martyr, she was also an Apostle.

Thekla: Equal to the Apostles

Ps.-Basil's vision of Thekla's authority is established by St. Paul's discourse near the end of the *Life* in which St. Paul invests Thekla with apostolic authority:

[Thekla] you already are victorious over troubles and courses of action of apostolic proportion so that you no longer lack any [qualification] for apostleship and inheritance of the divine message. Away with you, then, and teach the Word, and finish the evangelical course and share with me zeal on behalf of Christ. For on this account Christ has chosen you through me in order that he may

attract you into apostleship and place in your hands some of the cities still uninstructed.²⁷⁶

It is clear that Ps.-Basil regards Thekla as an apostle though she is not styled as such in the *APTh*. He does not use the word *isapostolos* but still he numbers Thekla among the apostles.²⁷⁷ Similarly, Ps.-Basil references Thekla as being equal to the apostles (though she is not referenced as such in the *APTh*) when he writes:

O Virgin...you who are the loveliest first fruit of the church after, of course, the apostles, or numbered even with those very apostles.²⁷⁸

And again

For you yourself [Thekla] will also attract many other followers and lead them to your bridegroom as Peter [does], as John [does], as each of our apostles [does] among whom you yourself by all means also will be counted—I know it well.²⁷⁹

The title to Ps.-Chrysostom's homily on Thekla is to "the holy protomartyr and apostle Thekla."²⁸⁰ Later, the historian Nicephorous referred to the "holy apostle Thekla."²⁸¹ Today in various liturgies of eastern churches Thekla is one of several saints who bears the title "Equal to the Apostles." That title is reserved for a specific category of saints. According to Piccard,

These are the women and men saints through the centuries who *first* brought the Christian faith to a territory, country or people, or who had a major role in converting peoples or in maintaining the faith...²⁸²

Eisen describes those who are called "Equal to the Apostles" as "being associated with primary missionary activity."²⁸³ This is consistent with Thekla being sent by St. Paul to preach the Word in "cities still uninstructed."

As Piccard states, thus far, there is no known formal criterion or process for the assignment of the title. Several New Testament women including the Easter morning Myrrh-Bearing women, Photini (the traditional name of the Samaritan woman at the well), and Apphia (Philemon 1.2) of the New Testament seem to have received the title retroactively.²⁸⁴ Thekla is the earliest extra-biblical woman to whom the title is known to have been attached. While Thekla is regarded as the protomartyr, nowhere is she described as first among women apostles. That honour goes to Mary Magdalene. Rufinus (c. 403) provides the first attestation to the fourth-century missionary activity of a *captiva* who is credited with the proclamation of Christ in Georgia.²⁸⁵ In Georgian tradition Rufinus' prisoner of war is identified as Nino/Nina, "Equal to the Apostles."²⁸⁶ Both Mary Magdalene (July 22) and Thekla (September 24) are cited as "Equal to the Apostles" in the *Menologion* of the *Liturgikon*, the missal of the Byzantine Church.²⁸⁷

Thekla is referred to as apostle nine times in the *Life & Miracles*: six times in the *Life*, and three in the *Miracles*.²⁸⁸ In the prologue to the *Life*, Ps.-Basil explains that he has undertaken to write "the history of the apostle and martyr" "so as not to leave unknown any of the *words spoken* or the *deeds done* by the apostle and martyr."²⁸⁹ Ps.-Basil especially mentions "words spoken" and "deeds done." We have already seen that deeds and activity are especially associated with Thekla *qua* Martyr. It would seem that "words spoken" is associated with apostleship. This is corroborated by Paul's instructions to Thekla, as an apostle to "preach the Word." Because the *Miracles* are about Thekla's post-disappearance thaumaturgical activity (rather than establishing her apostolic authority which has already been determined in the *Life*) it is to be expected that her apostleship would figure to a lesser degree in this part of the text.

Thekla in the Myrtle Wood

In contrast to the *Miracles*, the *Myrtle Wood*, the anonymous account of Thekla's pre-disappearance missionary activity in Seleucia and the surrounding area, presents her primarily in the aspects of Apostle²⁹⁰ and Virgin.²⁹¹ In this text, Thekla is referred to as Apostle thirteen times, and as Virgin eleven times. The word Martyr does not occur in the text. In its place, the word Protomartyr is used and only infrequently (and only in formulaic conjunction with Apostle with or without Virgin).²⁹² In general, when the author of the *Myrtle Wood* refers to Thekla, it is primarily as "the holy Apostle;" however, in the course of his narrative, when he references her from the perspective of others such as the Isaurian nobleman and his wife, the Seleucian doctors, or the unclean spirits—both in indirect and in direct speech—the word Virgin is used exclusively.

In the *Myrtle Wood*, the author cites St. Paul's endorsement of Thekla as an apostle (15). Her message (*κηρύγμα*), her healings, her fight with wild beasts, her preaching of the Gospel, and her part in founding the church are mentioned in reference to Thekla in her aspect as Apostle.

In the aspect of Virgin, in the *Myrtle Wood*, Thekla is associated with women renouncing (*ἀπετάξαντο*) the world and embracing asceticism,²⁹³ with driving out *daemones*, with healing, and with outperforming the local doctors who mistake her as a virgin priestess of Artemis. And as Virgin, Thekla escapes sexual assault by the men whom the doctors hire to deflower her.

The triune formula for Thekla encountered in the *Life & Miracles* is also present in the *Myrtle Wood* but with more embellishment: "the holy apostle and beautiful virgin, protomartyr among women" (4-5);²⁹⁴ "the holy, beautiful virgin, protomartyr, and

apostle” (78); “Thekla from Iconium, the virgin, protomartyr and apostle of God” (194). As an apostle, Thekla was qualified to perform baptism and to evangelize. The author of the *Myrtle Wood* is unapologetic that Thekla baptized Androklea and her daughter Theonilla and that she persuaded a nobleman to become a Christian. It should be noted, however, that in the case of the nobleman, a priest from Antioch arrived to baptize the man and his entire household.

Conclusion

In the *Life*, Ps.-Basil showcases Thekla as Apostle while in the *Miracles* he presents her primarily in the aspect of Martyr. Thekla as Virgin is given the least prominence by Ps.-Basil (which seems odd in that he is writing in a Christian cultural milieu in which chastity—especially virginity—was highly valued and promoted). The author of the *Myrtle Wood*, on the other hand, through his authorial lens, presents Thekla primarily as Apostle but, when writing of others’ perceptions of and interactions with Thekla, he refers to her exclusively as the Virgin. The epithet “Martyr” receives the least press in the *Myrtle Wood*.

St. Thekla resonates with both Ps.-Basil and with the anonymous author of the *Myrtle Wood*. She is, however, more “saintly” in the *Myrtle Wood*. Both authors regard Thekla as Virgin, Apostle and Martyr. It is difficult to identify exclusive domains for the nomenclature but let me repeat here that Apostle refers primarily to Thekla’s authority and divine assignment; Virgin, to her manner of life and intercessory work; and Martyr, to her miracles and thaumaturgical activity. The *Myrtle Wood* could be likened to a mini-series in which her life and deeds are presented; while the *Life & Miracles* is on a much grander scale—and is more like a movie with its sequel.

François Bovon has observed that an author's selection of an apostle about whom to write is neither uncalculated nor arbitrary and reflects the author's preferences and convictions: "Dis-moi donc quel est ton apôtre et je te dirai qui tu es."²⁹⁵ There are two authors, two texts, one saint, and similar story lines but with subtle shades of emphasis. It is difficult to conjecture as to what made Thekla, especially in the aspect of apostle, particularly intriguing to the author of the *Myrtle Wood*. That Ps.-Basil forefronts Thekla as Martyr in the *Miracles*—one ready to lend aid and vanquish evildoers—is understandable considering the challenges he faced with the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The Thekla of the *Miracles* is a different Thekla from the one who persists in extant texts from both the eastern and western empires, and a different Thekla from the one who is presented in feminist studies today, and still a different Thekla from the one worshipped in Catholic and Orthodox liturgies. Iconographically, Thekla persisted in Christian tradition in her aspect of Martyr. Textually, Thekla as Virgin endured in the west while eastern texts perpetuated her story as both Virgin and Martyr. The notion of Thekla as an apostle was suppressed. Regardless of authorial vision or intent, Thekla herself remains "thrice-blessed."

Truly Empowered: Thekla as Chorus Leader

"I would only believe in a God who knows how to dance."

- Friedrich Nietzsche

In *Mir.* 44, Ps.-Basil's literary composition reaches a crescendo of praise for St. Thekla, dramatically set off from the rest of the text by the use of the optative mood (applied sparingly elsewhere) and embellished with the *topos* of inexpressibility:

Which could anyone say is better? In regard to these people (i.e. followers of St. Thekla) on the one hand, to be under the direction (*ταχθῆναι*) of such a leader (*ἡγεμονίδι*) (i.e. Thekla) and to be trained by her in asceticism; or, on the other hand, in regard to the martyr, to take care of and to lead this *choros* (*ἐξάγειν χοροῦ*)— compared to the members of which, female and male alike, the entire cosmos has no equal?²⁹⁶

In this passage, the author's ultimate representation of Thekla, the zenith of praise for her, Thekla is described as a choral leader extraordinaire and not the leader of just any chorus, but of the very best chorus, both collectively and individually, of which the world can boast! The exemplary lives of the individual members of this virginal and continent chorus are in themselves miracles of Thekla.

To better understand the significance of Thekla's characterization by Ps.-Basil as the Chorus Leader of her devotees, the concept of dance and its relation to virginity in the mindset of the early Church needs to be contextualized.

The persistence of dance phenomena and terminology in Christian texts has long been debated in scholarship. The phrase "chorus of virgins" (as distinct from *tagma* or *sunodia*) occurs regularly in late-antique Christian texts. Interestingly, of the three recognized orders (*tagmai*) for women in the late antique church (widows, deaconesses, and virgins) only that of virgins implied movement—from a terrestrial state to a celestial one. Granted, the phrase is often employed in reference to the celestial state and with the future tense, which justifies an anagogical interpretation; at other times, however, it is used in the present tense, and in a context suggestive of actual practice. Is the phraseology merely symbolic or might it also be indicative of actual practice?

The celestial/terrestrial dichotomy in regard to choruses is captured in the fifth - century work *The History of the Monks of Syria* by Theodoret who writes:

[The Cilician monk Theodosius] after living a short time, migrated to the angelic chorus (*choros*)...and was succeeded by Helladius whose disciple Romulus was made leader of a huge flock, and his chorus (*choros*) continues in our midst to this day. (10.8-9)

This passage is illustrative of the two contexts, the heavenly and the terrestrial, in which the phrase “chorus of virgins” occurs.

The expression “the chorus of virgins” has long been regarded in scholarship as a pervasive similitude or merely a metaphorical turn of phrase.²⁹⁷ When confronted with statements such as that of Gregory of Nazianus on Christmas Day, 379, enjoining his congregation to “Run with the Star! Praise God with the Shepherds! Sing hymns with the Angels! Dance with the Archangels!,” scholars have been reluctant to understand them as reflective of an actual practice of liturgical dance in the Church.²⁹⁸

In the fifth century, Nicetas of Remesiana in Dacia argued, however, that a sublimation of a particular thing such as “making melody in your heart” does not preclude the actual practice of singing (*De utilitate hymnorum* 2).²⁹⁹ It follows, then, that the concept of “dancing with the angels” does not necessarily preclude the practice of dance. Certainly, many of the compositions by the early Byzantine liturgist Romanos the Melodist invited the congregants to physical expression during worship. There is general agreement based on textual evidence for Christian dance during the second and third centuries. That spontaneous dance was a recognized and acceptable practice of the early church is reflected in the following works: *The Acts of John*, the writings of Clement of Alexandria, the *Acts of Thomas*, and the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Evidence in regard to

choral vocabulary and phraseology, scattered though it may be in Christian texts, attests that the energy of choral dance was not only sublimated to the spiritual but was also, at times, employed in actualized and functional contexts, even liturgical ones.

Historically, dance was more endemic in the eastern empire than in the west.³⁰⁰ Dancing was most often religious in nature. According to Lucian, "...one cannot find a single ancient mystery in which there is not dancing."³⁰¹ This is particularly the case in Asia Minor which has long been described as a song and dance culture and which Pindar characterized, with *double-entendre*, as "Asia with broad dancing places."³⁰² Rough Cilicia was one of the regions where Alexander the Great chose to stage not only athletic games for the enjoyment of his troops, as was his custom, but musical competitions as well. Ps.-Basil's glowing recommendation of Seleucia cites the eloquence of its rhetors and "the melodiousness of its music" (*Life* 27). Indeed, music and dance were as endemic to the region as was banditry. In fact, the two are juxtaposed in one account in which Isaurian bandits make their captives dance and sacrifice to Zeus.

It is within the borders of Asia Minor that accounts of dancing virgins seem particularly prevalent. In the pre-history of central and eastern Asia Minor, as recorded in the religious festival texts of the Hittites, the tradition of their neighbours, the Hittites, included religious progresses up mountains led by dancing virgins followed by the king and queen and their priestly retinue. And it was in Venasa of Cappadocia that the scandal of Glycerius the presbyter and his kidnapped chorus of dancing virgins occurred. The *Shepherd of Hermas* (early second century), which enjoyed quasi-canonical status in the East (while not widely read in the West despite its Roman provenance), includes the enchanting *descriptio* of dancing virgins.³⁰³ Methodius' *Symposium of the Ten Virgins*,

written most likely at Termessos and regarded as one of the loveliest prose poems in Christian literature,³⁰⁴ presents the virgins as standing in a chorus with Thekla at the center as their leader.

Christian dance was often explained as an *imitatio*. Gregory of Nazianzos, in his sermon on 4 Macabees, ascribes the following words to the mother of the seven martyrs:

<Their sufferings> are now acclaimed by the survivors as a delight, a glory, a reason for instituting dances (*chorostasiai*) and joyous celebrations.

Gregory follows the mother's declaration of praise with this exhortation:

Priests, mothers, children—let us imitate them! ³⁰⁵

Saint Basil, as well, urges an *imitatio* when he writes, *Τί οὖν μακαριώτερον τοῦ τήν ἀγγέλων χορείαν ἐν γῆ μιμεῖσθαι.*³⁰⁶ To the mind of the late antique Church, there was no one better able to imitate the chorus of the angels than dedicated virgins.

The Church Fathers were heirs to the Graeco-Roman notion of celestial harmony and the music of the spheres, the Pythagorean-Platonic persuasion that music originates in the ordered movement of the celestial spheres and subsequently resonates and is mirrored by the healthy body and virtuous soul. Echoes of such thinking can be detected in such works as the *Acts of John*, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the *Acts of Thomas*, the writings of Clement of Alexandria, and Philo's description of the Therapeutae recorded by Eusebius, all texts widely read in the East.

According to Miller, three basic images persisted in Christianity: 1) the communal dance of creation, 2) the spiritual dance of Ecclesia and 3) the perpetual dance of paradise.³⁰⁷ The Cappadocian and Eastern Church Fathers extensively employed dance imagery in their writings, reasoning that the purest souls, being ordered by God, are the

most harmonious. It follows that virgins, being chaste and pure, are restored to the pre-lapsarian blessedness, a life of purity and chastity like that of the angels. Novatian, in his treatise *On Purity* [7], writes, “Virginity makes itself equal to the angels.” And since angels and archangels sing and dance in the celestial spheres, by analogical association, so do virgins. Virgins qualify for the angelic chorus precisely because they are unencumbered by marriage. They have retraced their steps to the point of departure at the fall. Gregory of Nyssa (*De virginitate* 12.4) expands on the thought when he writes,

Now, through the same sequence it is possible for us to retrace the steps and return to the original blessedness. And what was this sequence?

Gregory lists the sequence: the pleasure brought about by deceit, the fall, shame and fear, the hiding in leaves and shadows and then the cover-up by skins, disease, toil, and marriage “as a consolation for death.” He continues,

If we are going to return thence and be with Christ, we must begin at the point of deviation...and the point of departure from the life in paradise was the married state, reason suggests to those returning to Christ they first give this [marriage] up.

In the *Life of Olympias*, Olympias’ journey on “the path that leads to heaven” is facilitated by her “tracing the footsteps” of Thekla.³⁰⁸ In the “liturgically-formulated”³⁰⁹ *Hymn of Thekla* contained in Methodius’ *Symposium of the Ten Virgins* (11.3), Thekla lists those things that she left behind on her pathway to God:

For Thee, my King, have I refused a mortal marriage...and I have come to Thee in immaculate robes that I may enter with Thee Thy blessed bridal chamber.

In *De virginitate*, (14.4), Gregory comments,

For if the life which is promised to the just by the Lord after the resurrection is similar to that of the angels, and release from marriage is a peculiar characteristic of the angelic nature, the virgin has already received some of the beauties of the promise.”

John Chrysostom takes a similar position in his discussion of virginity (*De virginitate*).

Through virginity, mankind vies to be equal to the angels. The angels have stood continuously by God and serve Him: so does the virgin. ...Do you grasp the value of virginity? That it makes those who spend time on earth live like the angels dwelling in heaven?” (1.1-2).

He also writes,

Virginity appeared at the beginning and was prior to marriage...Adam would not have needed it if he had remained obedient...” (17.5).

According to Ambrose, “In holy virgins we see on earth the life of the angels we lost in paradise.”³¹⁰ In the late-antique Christian paradigm, virgins enjoyed what McVey describes as “a proleptic participation in the paradisaal state.”³¹¹ Finally, following Gregory of Nyssa’s reasoning that “...the power of virginity is such that it resides in heaven with the Father of spiritual beings and takes part in the chorus of the supramundane powers,” virgins are enrolled in the angelic chorus. This line of reasoning gives rise to the phrase “chorus of virgins.” Angels sing and dance; and then, so do virgins.

In Plato’s *Laws*, dance is represented as an essential building block of a city-state. Plato [Bk. 2] envisaged a city “danced into existence” believing that “the gods are our companions in the Dance, and we follow them, joining hands together...in dances and songs...and these they call choruses.” For Plato chorus training constituted the highest education that the state could offer, and choruses were the supreme cultural expression of

civic *paideia*.³¹² To this can be added Lycurgus' insistence that competition breeds excellence and that, in the most excellent cities, the finest choruses were to be found.³¹³ In regard to Christianity, focused as it was upon establishing the city of God, it is not illogical to find dance to have played a role. The Church Fathers extended such thinking to the Heavenly City and hence, the idea of the chorus of virgins was envisioned.

This imagery was bolstered by Christianity's Hebraic heritage. Davies writes that while there is nothing in the New Testament to compel the rejection of dancing—apart from the wanton dance of Salome—there are numerous examples of actualized practice in the Old Testament to encourage it.³¹⁴ The fact that Miriam led the chorus of maidens with a tambourine in hand seems to be particularly significant to the minds of the Church Fathers. Gregory of Nyssa (*De virginitate* 19) writes that immediately after crossing the sea,

[Miriam] took in her hand a dry and sounding timbrel and conducted the women's dance. By this timbrel the story may mean to imply virginity...Just as the timbrel emits a loud sound because it is devoid of all moisture and reduced to the highest degree of dryness, so has virginity a clear and ringing report among men because it repels from itself the vital sap of merely physical life.³¹⁵

As is well known, in Greek physiology dry was associated with masculine traits, and what was good and to be trusted, while wet was associated with the feminine, suspect and bad. In this regard, Methodius writes,

Chastity contributes not a little towards the ready attainment of incorruptibility: it makes the flesh buoyant, raising it up and drying out its moisture. (*Symp.* VI.5; VIII.4, 12)

Ashbrook-Harvey catalogues these two categories in classical thought as follows: 1) mortality which corresponds to “wetness, coldness, decay, rot, illness, wounds, disintegration, death, and destruction” and, 2) immortality which corresponds to “dryness, heat, preservation, vitality, health, bounty, beauty.”³¹⁶

Gregory of Nyssa (*De virginitate* 13.3) exhorts fellow celibates that they separate themselves “from life in the flesh which death normally follows upon, and seek a kind of life which does not have death as its consequence. This life is virginity.”

Miriam, Thekla, and St. Synclética are linked in this regard by the author of the *Life of St. Synclética* when he writes,

One could consider her [Synclética] the true disciple of the blessed Thekla as she followed her in the same teachings...David too sang holy and divine canticles over them both; for with fine sounding cymbals he gladdens the souls dedicated to God, and with timbrels he sends up his perfect song (Ps. 45). And for these holy wedding rites Miriam leads in the dancers...(Vita Syncléticae 8)

Miller suggests that the Fathers restrained their enthusiasm for the world-chorus and reserved their religious awe for Jesus, the “Choragus of All Life.”³¹⁷ Methodius describes Jesus as the leader of the chorus of virgins.³¹⁸ Ambrose declares, “Virginity is of Christ.”³¹⁹ According to Heffernan “...if the Old Testament ideal of womanhood was fecundity, the New Testament ideal was virginity.”³²⁰ He also writes that virginity eclipsed the ideal of martyrdom as the most worthy *imitatio Christi*.³²¹ Christ is the ultimate virgin³²² and, therefore, chorus leader. And dedicated virgins are members of Christ’s chorus.

Jesus Christ is specifically Thekla’s chorus leader. In her hymn in Methodius’ *Symposium* (.5-6), she declares that she thinks “not of the dances of maidens of [her] own

age” and hails Christ as *choragos* supplicating Him to hear her cry, “The choir of virgins (*choros parthenōn*) calls upon Thee...!” Ps.-Athanasius ends his treatise *On Virginité* with this dedication, “I have written this work for you, Beloved Sister, Choral Dancer of Christ (*choreutria Christou*).”³²³ These words could also be applied to Thekla.

The characterization of Thekla as the Choral Leader of a mixed-gender chorus is perhaps even more powerful than her representation as Virgin, Martyr, or Apostle and the one that imbues her with the most authority. That authority, however, derives from her relation to Christ the *Choragos*. In the classical world, the provision, direction, and vision for a chorus all issued from the *choragos*. The choral leader followed the impulse of the *choragos*’ will. It was in her submission to Christ, that Thekla was truly empowered. It is in this context alone that Thekla can legitimately be appropriated as a prototype for women’s empowerment today.

Conclusion

An overarching term for the various aspects of Thekla that I have examined in this chapter is that of “Champion” which is applied to Thekla by John of Damascus:

Now longing for purity, the Champion [Thekla] rejected all the pleasures of life: wealth, race and beauty, and a fair suitor.³²⁴

Thekla earned the title of Champion not only in that, by God’s grace, she was victorious in her own *agones* but also in that she championed the cause of others.³²⁵ Among the sacrifices that Thekla made in assuming her divine assignment, John of Damascus notes that of “race.” Thekla left her native and, by her own description, “illustrious city” of Iconium to go to Rough Cilicia, the abode of the notorious people of the Isaurians, where she spent the remainder of her life in the service of others. As Virgin, Martyr, Apostle,

Choral Leader, and ultimately as Champion, it is no wonder that Thekla has served as a powerful role model for women across the centuries.

As we have seen in the preceding chapters, the story of Thekla is multi-layered—temporally and geographically—and still is not without impact today. The story of Thekla does not stand alone, however; it is inextricably linked to the story of St. Paul and his early missionary activity in Asia Minor. Thekla's story is imbedded in that of St. Paul's (physically reinforced by her *Acta* being contained within his). Their stories stand as individual testimonies to God's sustaining grace and demonstrate the Christian paradox that strength is made perfect in weakness. As John of Damsacus wrote about Thekla:

The weakness of a girl's nature was made strong by the Saviour's power, for with longing for God she left off the ornaments of youth and boldly by night ran seeking the sweet-scented teachings of her Lover....Spiritually the Martyr kissed the bonds of her inspired Teacher [Paul]; in the prison, as in a God-filled meadow, watered by his words she grew and truly bore the fairest fruit for the Master [the Lord God].³²⁶

Notes to Chapter 3

¹⁸⁸ Please note that I am leaving the word *daemon* untranslated throughout the dissertation and my English translation of the *Miracles*.

¹⁸⁹ Dunn (1993), 255.

¹⁹⁰ Dunn (1993), 258.

¹⁹¹ Petropoulos (1995), 138.

¹⁹² Schulenburg (1990), 286.

¹⁹³ Davies (1980), 113.

¹⁹⁴ Davies (1980), 113.

¹⁹⁵ Davies (1980), 60-61.

¹⁹⁶ Davis (2001), x.

¹⁹⁷ Dagron (1978), 134.

¹⁹⁸ *Ath* 8 and 9 (St. Pachomius translation).

¹⁹⁹ Aymer (1997), 46-7.

²⁰⁰ Tert. *De bapt.* 17 (CSEL 20.215): *Acta Pauli quae perperam scripta sunt...ad licentiam mulierum docendi tinguendique defendere...*

²⁰¹ Dunn (1993), 245-6; Hayne (1994), 209; Boughton (1991), 374-6. The term *pia fraus* is borrowed from Petropoulos (1995), 127.

²⁰² Boughton (1991), 386, notes that neither of the feminist scholars, Ruether or Shüssler, in discussing the exclusion of the *APTh* from the canon of Scripture established in 393 at the Council of Hippo, observe that the late-second-century *APTh* would be an “oddity” amongst the canonical narrative books written more than a century earlier.

²⁰³ Giannarelli (1991), 195, also addresses Thekla’s renunciation of femininity but interprets it differently. She suggests that the attainment of the faith presupposes the abandonment of that which is customary and the sacrifice of more worldly aspects associated with being a woman. She suggests that in the light of Thekla’s physical beauty physical mortification takes on greater significance and reflects a further interior transformation.

²⁰⁴ The feminist scholars’ interpretation and application of Thekla’s cutting of her hair differs sharply from its interpretation and application in the tonsuring for nuns today. According to Albrecht (1986), 315-16, the present-day Greek and Slavic liturgy for the tonsuring of nuns invokes the holy protomartyr Thekla. Albrecht also cites an Arabic rite still used today for Egyptian nuns that presents Thekla as their example. After their tonsure, the priest prays:

Now also, we ask and pray of Thee, Thou Lover of man, send the Grace of the Holy Spirit on this, Thy handmaid. With blessings bless her and with purity purify her. Keep her pledge unpolluted forever. Grant her the purity of her body and keep her soul without blame. Every evil thought that is filled with defect, disperse Thou from the heart as Thou has dispersed it from Thecla when she cut her hair and followed Paul. And may the cutting of her hair be for her a sign of death and of a stop to all senses and all empty affairs.

²⁰⁵ Giannarelli (1991), 195, sees this not as a gender statement but rather as a “step by step surrender of the outward trappings of her obvious and highly vulnerable femininity.”

²⁰⁶ Berggren and Marinatos (1995), 8.

²⁰⁷ Dunn (1993), 246. Dunn, n. 6, cites Xenophon. For further discussion on pragmatic cross-dressing see Radermacher (1916), 85; Söder ([1932] 1969), 127-8; and Voight (1995), 147, who claims that

Thekla's manly appearance is sometimes iconographically depicted but gives no supporting references.

²⁰⁸ See Haas (1997), 311, for Damascius' description of Hypatia as she "wrapped herself in the philosopher's robe and went out into the midst of the city."

²⁰⁹ Interestingly, in the depiction of a funeral procession at El Bagawat, noted by Davis (2001), 160-166, Thekla is dressed in purple again. My thanks to Dr. John Vanderspoel for drawing the parallel between Hipparchia and Thekla. In correspondence with me, he also suggested that "rather than being characterized as trans-gendered in some way, the use of men's clothing may perhaps come from two factors in combination: philosophy was (more or less; there are a few females known) a male occupation, and, secondly, there was simply no tradition at all of what type of female clothing female philosophers might wear. Note, too, that Hypatia is sometimes said to have worn male clothing—in other words, this idea appears to have continued to a much later period; also that at Rome prostitutes were supposed to wear togas, because they were not behaving like proper women. So, the male clothing represents the fact, more than anything else, that these women were not engaged in female (pre)occupations. I would suspect that the dark tunic and cloak of Euphemia (described as a sign of philosophy) and the mantle of Thekla are meant to represent male clothing. These women, then, were not behaving as women should in the ancient world, so therefore dressed as men." A detailed description of the mantle of the female personification of Philosophy is found in Boeth. *Cons. Phil.* Book 1, prosa 1, but no reference is made to the colour purple. According to Castelli (2004), 127-32, there are at least three different traditions in regard to Euphemia's martyrdom during the reign of Diocletian. The earliest account of her martyrdom is by Bishop Asterius of Amasea in Pontus (c. 350-410) in his *Homily Eleven*. The brief sermon takes the form of an *ekphrasis* in which Asterius describes a painting with three vignettes from Euphemia's martyrdom that he chanced upon in a church near her tomb. The first vignette is a rendering of her trial and torture. It is in this vignette that Asterius sees Euphemia dressed with a philosopher's cloak. Mango (1972), 38, n. 77, suggests that "by avoiding the use of bright coloured garments Euphemia was showing her serious preoccupation with 'philosophy,' i.e. religion." Dehandschutter (2003), 188, n. 65, argues that since Christianity was the true philosophy, "those who embodied it excellently like the martyrs can be called philosophers." There is no known reference to *Homily Eleven* until the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicea in 787 when it was cited as a spiritually appropriate and legitimate representation of a saint's life. Castelli notes that the *Acta Sanctorum* contains a collection of texts in regard to St. Euphemia. The basilica of St. Euphemia at Chalcedon was the site in 451 for the famous fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon. Egeria stopped to visit the site in the late fourth century (Egeria, *Itin.* 23.7). Socrates (*HE* 6.6.12) records the meeting between Emperor Arcadius and Gainas, the leader of the Goths at the *martyrion* of Euphemia. Evagrius Scholasticus (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.3) provides a description of the church. For an English translation of Asterius' *Homily Eleven*, see Dehandschutter (2003), 162-193, esp. 173-76; Mango (1972), 37-9. See also *PG* 49.195, Asterius of Amasea, *Discourse against the Feast of Calends* (Homily 4.1) in Vyonis (1981), 211.

²¹⁰ See Bugge (1975), 121-2.

²¹¹ *Life* 25.17-18.

²¹² *Myrtle Wood* 195-9.

²¹³ *Life* 25.16-8.

²¹⁴ *APTh* 9.25/40.

²¹⁵ Dagrón (1978), 98, n.5, notes the two different costumes that Thekla was wearing in this miracle as further proof that the second half of the miracle was added at a later date. Dagrón (1978), 98, writes that the *tribonion* is "une sorte de manteau s'agrafant sur l'épaule qui n'est cette fois ni monastique, ni même féminine, qui évoquerait plutôt le déguisement de la Thècle émancipée de la Vie." The

tribonion, however, is not mentioned in the *Life*. Dagron also sees a parallel between the blessed robe of the Virgin of Blachernae and Thekla's robe. Thekla used hers to avert the wasps that were stinging Ps.-Basil; while the Virgin of Blachernae was supposed to protect Constantinople from attack. Interestingly, the *tribonion* is mentioned in *Ar. Vesp.* 116. Dagron (1978), 321, n. 15, sees the term *τριβωνίω* as "un peu impropre." Perhaps, unexpected. *LSJ* s.v. associate the *tribonion* with cloaks worn by philosophers such as Socrates (*Pl. Smp.* 2.19b) and particularly by the Cynics (Krates *Theb.* 1; *Arr. Epict.* 3.1.24), as well as the Stoics (Zeno, *Stoic* 1.63).

²¹⁶ Corrington Streete (2006), 259.

²¹⁷ See Dagron (1978), 49-50. Jerome, *Ep.* 22 to Eustochium, disparages women who wear among other things a "*maforte* fluttering from their shoulders." Wright (1933), 81 *LCL*, n. 2, describes a *maforte* as a sort of cape, usually of a lilac colour.

²¹⁸ *PG* 105.329-332.

²¹⁹ The term is also used in the LXX in *Exod.* 28.6 in reference to the ephod of the high priest which also had jewels at the shoulder.

²²⁰ The *omophorion* in Byzantine times was a long scarf signifying episcopal status. The Latin term is *pallium*. See Gerstel (1999), 25-6. According to Gerstel, the *omophorion* was "the most distinctive component of the bishop's vestments... was wrapped around the neck and often decorated with crosses." The celebrant was expected to doff or don the *omophorion* at appropriate moments during the liturgy. Gerstel cites Germanos, the patriarch of Constantinople who likened the *omophorion* to "the stole of Aaron, which the priests of the Law wore, placing long cloths on their left shoulders." Germanos of Constantinople (1984), 66-7.

²²¹ For example, see Davies (1980), 113 and Burrus (1987), 89. For a rebuttal, see Dunn (1993), 255.

²²² Numbered among the *synergoi* of Paul are Timothy (*Rom.* 16.21); Epaphroditus (*Phil.* 2.25); Clement (*Phil.* 4.13); Priscilla (*Rom.* 16.3); and Euodia and Syntyche (*Phil.* 4.2-3).

²²³ See Dunn (2000), 93.

²²⁴ Some see this group as being composed of fellow catechumens. In the *Passio*, the catechumens become friends and spend time together. McKechnie (1999), 42-3, notes that by 200, a two- or three-year catechumenate was common to both men and women and that they shared the same course of education and the same classes.

²²⁵ Egeria, *Itin.* 23.2-3, 6.

²²⁶ *Mir.* 44.21-23, 50-4.

²²⁷ *Greg. Naz. Carm.* ii.i.xi. 547: *πρώτων μὲν ἦλθον εἰς Σελεύκιαν φυγὰς τὸν παρθενῶνα τῆς αἰοιδίμου κόρης Θέκλας.*

²²⁸ *Mir.* 45.5-7.

²²⁹ Feminists, however, may conjecture that the young man was killed by Thekian Maenads. See Hill (1996), 216; Dagron (1978), 61, n. 5; Ciner (1964), 251-71. *Mir.* 30 provides an account of burial at Hagia Thekla.

²³⁰ Like Thekla, Konon was an agonistic saint and was often pitted against the Isaurian bandits whom he encountered slithering like serpents out from the rocks. See Halkin (1985), 5-34. Konon's *vita* indicates that as a highlander and a native Lycaonian speaker, Konon was better suited to evangelize Isauria than the lowlander Paul of Tarsus. For the Isaurians as snakes, see *Amm. Marc. Hist.* xix. 13.1.

²³¹ Malalas (1986), 389, 405, 431, 473.

²³² St. Menas is thought to have been a native Egyptian who, while soldiering under Diocletian, was martyred in Asia Minor. For further discussion of the pairing of the two saints, see Davis (2001), 120-6. For a catalogue of the *ampullae*, see his Appendix A, 195-200.

²³³ See Davis (2001), 60.

²³⁴ Wagner-Hasel (1989), 18-29.

²³⁵ See Dagron (1978), 99.

²³⁶ For the topic of women's "defiance," see Burrus (1986), 111-13; Davies (1980).

²³⁷ For a discussion on deconstructionism vs. reconstructionism in regard to the story of Thekla for women's empowerment, see Corrington Streete (2006), 254-64.

²³⁸ Holzhey (c. 1905) as cited by Albrecht (1986), sec. 5.4.

²³⁹ For Thekla as the "beastfighter" see the section on the "Iconography of Thekla" in Chapter 2.

²⁴⁰ Malalas (1986), *Chron.* 12.7, provides this description of the crown and clothing of the first Alytarch of the games at Daphne (c. 211/2): "He wore a robe as white as snow and interwoven with gold, a crown of rubies, pearls, and other precious stones." The rescript of Emperor Hadrian authorizing the Demostheneia at Oenoanda (Sect. III) specifies that the *agnothete* was to wear a gold crown with relief portraits of the emperor and of Apollo. Price (1998)170-1, identifies Alexander as "almost certainly a priest of the imperial cult in Antioch." According to Price, Alexander's type of crown is primarily associated with Asia Minor. Thekla's crime as written on the plaque read: "Thekla, the sacrilegious violator of the gods, who dashed the imperial crown from the head of Alexander." Price refers his readers to *CTh.* IX.35.4 for the "seriousness of an assault on a priest."

²⁴¹ Pesthy (1996), 165.

²⁴² For terminology, see Schulenburg (1990), 299 and Schulenburg (1998), 43-44. For discussion of Thekla as a militant or warrior saint, see Walter (2003), 26-28, 54.

²⁴³ Dagron (1978), 100.

²⁴⁴ Johnson (2006), 9, 120, 130-140.

²⁴⁵ *Mir.* 35.43-7.

²⁴⁶ *Mir.* 27.46. Ps.-Basil uses the term *ἐρωώδεις*. Dr. Reyes Bertolin in conversation with me has shared that even today in Spain, an angry child might receive as a scolding, "Don't be a Thekla!"

²⁴⁷ *Mir.* epilogue 24. In addition to the epithet "Thrice-blessed One" and the formulaic but variously combined "Virgin, Martyr, and Apostle" address, Thekla is also referred to as the "Oh So Gentle One" (*Mir.* 19).

²⁴⁸ *Life* 28.36.

²⁴⁹ See the epilogue of the *Miracles*.

²⁵⁰ Corrington Streete (2006), 254-264, esp. 259.

²⁵¹ *Life* 1.13. In the *Troparion* (Tone 4) of the Antiochene Church in commemoration of Thekla (Sept. 24), Thekla is addressed as the "the first sufferer and martyr among women."

²⁵² Isidore's reference to Thekla as "protomartyr" is generally referenced in scholarship as contained in Bk. 1, *Ep.* 87. While Isidore does refer to Thekla in that epistle, it is in *Ep.* 1.160 (*PG* 78.290) instead that Isidore accords her that honour. I provide this translation of that epistle:

To Tarasius the Isaurian: Concerning the necessity to always be self-controlled.

All of your countrymen say you are the best of the people and they report that you are the most upright in regard to ethics not because you have mastered the harshness of the mountains but because of your love for the manner of life and for the sacred enclosure of the protomartyr Thekla. And you are blessed of the poor [in spirit]. For that is what is praiseworthy of those who believe. And I beg you that you remain constant since we do not have anything more firm when we are tossed about like winds by light shouts.

While not about Thekla, another letter by Isidore (Bk. 5. 40/ 1267), this time to the prefect Taurus, is very similar in its wording of praise for the addressee as is his praise for Tarasius.

²⁵³ Ps.-Chrysostom, *De sancta Thekla martyre*, *PG* 50.745-8.

²⁵⁴ Evag. Schol. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.8.2-3, 10 (*PG* 86b.2612).

²⁵⁵ The following are representative of the Byzantinists who refer to Thekla as protomartyr: Joannes Zonaras, *Gram. Epitome historiarum* (lib. 13-18), 74 line 7; 672, line 9; Ps-Symeon, *Chronographica* (cod. Paris. Gr. 1712), 685, line 23; Scylitzes Continuatus, *Continuatio Scylitzae*, Tsolakes (1968) 107, lines 13 (also refers to the date of her festival), 28; Severianus, *De caeco nato* vol. 59, 544, line 70; Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia* (lib. 1-6), 147, line 21; Michael Glycas, *Annales*, 602, line 13. Photius Lexicogr., *Scr. Eccl., Theol., Bibliotheca* (4040: 001) Codex 168, Bekker, 116b, line 2, writes,

*Ἔστι δὲ Βασιλείος οὗτος ὁ καὶ μέτροις ἐντείνας
Τὰ τῆς πρωτομάρτυρος Θέκλης ἔργα καὶ ἄθλα καὶ
νικητήρια· καὶ ἄλλα δὲ αὐτοῦ γράμματα.*

Thekla is celebrated in an illustrated Metaphrastic menologion for September. See London Additional 11870 f. 174v discussed by Walter (1981), 19 and Fig. 16.

²⁵⁶ As cited in *Denkschriften* 102 [Pamphylia, Isauria], document 219, 250, 1. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse.

²⁵⁷ As cited by Bowersock (1995), 76: Gr. Nyss. *Steph.* 2 (PG 46.725B); Epiph. *Adv. haeres.* 1.2; 25 (PG 41.321A); 3.1; 70.6 (PG 42.348C).

²⁵⁸ Bowersock (1995), 76, describes the fourth century as a “transitional” period and politely describes its patristic literature as “creative.”

²⁵⁹ Bowersock (1995), Appendix 1, 75-6. The more than one hundred citations for *protomartyr* in the *TLG* refer only to Stephen or to Thekla. The references to Stephen outnumber those to Thekla approximately 9:1.

²⁶⁰ *Mir.* 7.18, 20.15, and 35.11.

²⁶¹ See *Miracles* 5, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 27, 29, 30, and 31.

²⁶² Christ is referred to as Thekla’s King, Ally, and Bridegroom (*βασιλέα, σύμμαχον, and νυμφίον*) (*Life* 9.74).

²⁶³ *Mir.* 10, 14, 18, 19, and 24.

²⁶⁴ *Mir.* 1, 4 (twice), 5, 18, and 39.

²⁶⁵ *Life of Olympias*, chap. 1.

²⁶⁶ *Mir.* 15 and 29.

²⁶⁷ As quoted by Pesthy (1996), 172. See also, MacDonald and Scrimgeour (1986), 151-9; Aubineau (1975), 347-55.

²⁶⁸ The *Life*’s only reference to Mary the Mother of Christ is as “the holy virgin and ever-young Mary” (*ἁγία παρθένον καὶ ἀείπαιδος Μαρίας*) (*Life* 1.5-6). Mary is cited once in the *Miracles* (14.63) as the *θεοτόκος καὶ παρθένον Μαρίας*. The term *ἀείπαιδος* is an unusual one and appears only three other times in the *TLG* corpus and twice in relation to Mary (Epiphanius, *Homilia in laudes Mariae*, PG 43.493.25 and John of Damascus, PG 96.648.26) and once in reference to the Empress Pulcheria who pursued an *imitatio Mariae* (Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.38.19).

²⁶⁹ Cass. Dio 56.5.

²⁷⁰ See Emmett (1982), 507-10, for her survey of the term in the Greek papyri. Here the term most frequently also refers to Mary but there are other attestations as well.

²⁷¹ See Eisen (2000), 178 for fourth-century Macedonian inscriptions for Theoprepeia “servant of the Lord, eternal virgin and deacon of Christ,” and 98 for Theodora, “the eternal virgin, the mother and leader of the pious virgins.”

²⁷² Greg. Naz. *In Praise of Athanasius* (*Or.* 24) line 37.

²⁷³ Gr. Nyss. *Cant. (Homily 15)* PG 6.45, line 3.

²⁷⁴ The text was written, it is thought, most likely between the fifth and seventh centuries. PG 50. 745-8. See MacDonald and Scrimgeour (1986), 151-9. See also Aubineau (1975), 347-55.

²⁷⁵ Translated in Pesthy (1996), 172.

²⁷⁶ *Life* 26.55-65.

²⁷⁷ The term occurs only once in the *TLG* corpus: “Joannes Zonaras Epitome historiarum (lib. 13–18) (3135: 002) *Ioannis Zonarae epitomae historiarum libri xviii*, vol. 3, Ed. Büttner-Wobst, T.

Bonn: Weber, 1897; *Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae*. Page 23, line 7: Ὁ δ' ἰσαπόστολος αὐτοκράτωρ ἐπὶ τῆ τῶν πατέρων ὁμονοία ἡσθεὶς ἐδέξωτο αὐτούς.”

²⁷⁸ *Mir.* epilogue 36.

²⁷⁹ *Life* 9.79.

²⁸⁰ Ps.-Chrysostom, *De sancta Thecla martyre*, PG 50.745-8.

²⁸¹ Nicephorus, *Refutatio et eversio definitionis synodalis anni 815*, chp. 113, line 31.

²⁸² Piccard (forthcoming, no pagination) cites emperors and rulers who advanced the faith such as Constantine and his mother Helena, the fourth-century King Mirian and Queen Nana of Georgia, and several Russian czars who have also been included in the category of “Equal to the Apostles.”

²⁸³ Eisen (2000), 50.

²⁸⁴ In this group, Piccard (forthcoming, no pagination) cites the seven Myrrh-Bearing women on Easter morning (traditionally regarded as Ss. Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Cleopas, Salome (mother of James and John), Joanna, Mary and Martha of Bethany, and Susanna). Piccard describes Apphia as traditionally regarded as the wife of Philemon of the “Seventy” apostles.

²⁸⁵ Rufinus, *HE* I.10.

²⁸⁶ According to Eisen (2000), 52-3, two sections of “the *Collection of Satberti*” (c. 973 but with origins in the seventh century) give account of Nino’s apostolic activity: 1) *The Conversion of Georgia* and 2) *The Life of Nino*. For an English translation of the text, see Lang (1956), 13-39. For a detailed study of Nino, see Martin-Hisard (1997), 53-76.

²⁸⁷ Eisen (2000), 48 and n. 11. Also see 48-9 and nn. 16 and 17, for Eisen’s discussion of the various notions in early Christianity of the apostolate. Consider St. Paul’s comment in Romans 16:7 in which he sends greetings to Andronicus and Junia(s) whom he describes as “outstanding among the apostles” although they were not among the Twelve. John Chrysostom understood Junia(s) to be a woman: “It is certainly a great thing to be an apostle but to be outstanding among the apostles- think what praise that is! She was outstanding in her works, in her good deeds; oh, and how great is the philosophy of this woman that she was regarded as worthy to be counted among the apostles. (John Chrysostom, *Epist. ad Rom. homil.* 31.2 (PG 60.669-70) from Eisen’s translation (2000), 48). Piccard (pre-publication, no pagination, footnote) suggests that the title “Equal to the Apostles” may have initially been used to differentiate between the first-century Apostles and the second-century evangelists but necessarily changed with time when retroactively applied to NT saints. If the term did not arise until the fifth century, however, this may be an anachronistic argument. Piccard posits various apostolic categories: “The Twelve Apostles, the Seventy Apostles, saints who were Equal to the Apostles, and bishops as successors to the Apostles.”

²⁸⁸ See *Life* prologue 2, 26, 35; 9.79; 26.55-65; 28.36; *Mir.* 15.32; epilogue 1 and 36.

²⁸⁹ *Life* prologue 26.

²⁹⁰ *Myrtle Wood* 4, 11, 15, 30, 49, 57, 63, 75, 78, 82, 92, and 194.

²⁹¹ *Myrtle Wood* 4, 78, 100, 108, 115, 125, 136, 143, 161, 171, and 194.

²⁹² *Myrtle Wood* 4, 78, and 194.

²⁹³ *Myrtle Wood* 103.

²⁹⁴ *Τῆς ἁγίας ἀποστόλου καὶ καλλιπαρθένου πρωτομάρτυρος.*

²⁹⁵ Bovon (1981), 151.

²⁹⁶ *Mir.* 44.

- ²⁹⁷ The phrase along with other dance terminology has been treated in much the same way as the vocabulary of sport in Christian texts.
- ²⁹⁸ Chrysostom, *Or.* 38.17 *On the Theophany*, PG 36.332A.
- ²⁹⁹ Nicetas, *De utilitate hymnorum* 2, PL 68.365-76.
- ³⁰⁰ Oesterly ([1923] 2010), 73. According to Oesterly, dancing did not hold the same place in Roman culture as it did in that of the Greeks. Consider Cicero's observation, "No man who is in a sober state and not demented would dance either privately or in decent company"! (Cic. *Mur.* 6.13).
- ³⁰¹ Lucian, *Peri Orcheses* 15.177.
- ³⁰² Pind. *Ol.* 8, line 18.
- ³⁰³ Shepherd of Hermas, 74.4-5. See Miller (1986), 374.
- ³⁰⁴ Musirillo (1958), 37.
- ³⁰⁵ Greg. Naz. *Or.* 15. See Miller (1986), 55, n. 30.
- ³⁰⁶ Bas. *Ep.* 2.2.46. To this day in the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom of the Greek Orthodox Church, the choir of believers "mystically" represents the chorus of angels in the Cherubic Hymn. I owe this observation to Dr. Haijo Westra.
- ³⁰⁷ Miller (1986), 362.
- ³⁰⁸ *Life of Olympias*, 1.24-7 *Sources Chrétiennes* 13 bis. 408.
- ³⁰⁹ Aspegren (1990), 163.
- ³¹⁰ Ambrose, *De institutione virginis* CIV, PL 16.345.
- ³¹¹ McVey (1986), 226, n. 36.
- ³¹² See Anderson (1966), 66 and 141.
- ³¹³ Xen. *Lac.* 3.2.
- ³¹⁴ Davies (1984), 22. Davies lists as examples, 1) The Book of Daniel's apocryphal addition, "The Song of the Three Young Men," in which Nebuchadnezzar is enraged by Meschach, Shadrach, and Abednego *choreusantes* in the fiery furnace, 2) King David dancing before the ark, 3) Miriam leading the women's chorus after crossing the Red Sea, and 4) and dancing in Maccabees 3 and 4.
- ³¹⁵ Moore's translation in the *NPNF*.
- ³¹⁶ Ashbrook-Harvey (2006), 32, n. 97.
- ³¹⁷ Miller (1986), 352. See Origen. *C. Cels.* 8.19; Bas. *De spiritu sancto* v.7.7d; and the Holy Spirit, in 9.22.19c. Also see Miller (1986), 551, n.7.
- ³¹⁸ Meth. *Symp.* 1.5.
- ³¹⁹ Ambrose, *De virginitate* 1.5.22.
- ³²⁰ Heffernan (1988), 247.
- ³²¹ Heffernan (1988), 53.
- ³²² For Jesus as Archvirgin, see Meth. *Symp.* 10.3 and 5.
- ³²³ For the complete English translation, see Ps.-Athanasius (2000), 82-99 = Shaw (2000), 82-99.
- ³²⁴ John of Damascus, *Ode 4, Hymn of Thekla*. Trans. Archimandrite Ephrem.
<http://www.aug.edu/augusta/iconography/hagiographies/hymnProtomartyrThekla.htm>
- ³²⁵ Thekla's own suffering and her concern for the suffering of others can be compared to those of the suffering Messiah described in the Messianic passage in Isa. 53:3b: He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with <others'> griefs."
- ³²⁶ John of Damascus, *Ode 6, Hymn to Thekla*. Available at:
<http://www.aug.edu/augusta/iconography/hagiographies/hymnProtomartyrThekla.htm>

CHAPTER 4: THE HISTORICITY OF THEKLA

Whether Thekla was a historical figure is a matter of ongoing scholarly debate. There is no incontrovertible evidence for her historicity. The debate has primarily focused on various interpretations of Tertullian's rejection of the *Ath* as a *pia fraus*, which by association has cast doubt on the historicity of Thekla. In an attempt to reconcile the vast iconographic, monumental, material, and textual witnesses to the person of Thekla with the doubt arising from interpretations of Tertullian's text, recent scholarship has moved towards situating the *Ath* within the genre of folklore, which necessitates a negation of Thekla's historicity and reduces her to a legendary heroine. In the process, her story is trivialized.

Ruth Albrecht, however, cites Adolf von Harnack, Friedrich Heiler, Ludwig Radermacher, Kurt Aland, and Otto Bardenhewer, who himself rejected the historicity of the apocryphal *Acts of Thekla*, as all acknowledging an historical Thekla.³²⁷ Festugière argues for her historicity and the great archaeologist Wm. Ramsay traces a historical kernel within the *Acts of Thekla*, as does Anne Jensen. There have been doubters, of course, such as Carl Schmidt who regarded the story of Thekla as pure invention.³²⁸

In one sense, the debate lies outside the scope of this study. On the other hand, the implications of the argument influence the direction of my arguments and ultimately affect the value of my conclusions. As well, some information garnered in my research brings new insight to the discussion that allows the arguments to be freshly synthesized into a more meaningful whole. In this section, I will briefly review the issues of the

debate, raise a few questions (and objections), and conclude by adding insights from my research that support various aspects of the discussion.

Pia Fraus?

Scholars agree that the *ATh* is a composite of two narratives: The Iconian and the (Pisidian) Antiochene.³²⁹ Disagreement arises as to whether the original two narratives were oral or written. Because, as most scholars agree, the two narratives demonstrate women's solidarity,³³⁰ it is commonly accepted that the narratives about Thekla were oral tales circulated within women's communities and were told for women by women. The underlying notion here is that women would not have written down the story.

For another reason still unexplained, the assumption is made that a written narrative about Thekla would not have issued from the first century, and that, therefore, the text of the *APTh* that Tertullian rejects in the second century must be the first redaction of Thekla's story based on a composite of two separate oral narratives propagated by women. Ramsay argues for a first-century redaction but does not address the issue of the author's gender.³³¹ The argument continues that since Tertullian rejects the work as a *pia fraus*, then Thekla must not be an historical figure. That being the case, the argument runs, we are left with two separate first-century oral narratives, just folklore really, about a legendary heroine circulated by women in faith-based communities for devotional purposes (who did not, or could not, write things down).

Concerning the state of the scholarship in regard to Thekla, W. Rordorf writes:

Scholars have long haggled over the historicity of the Thecla story, some insisting it is pure fiction, others claiming it relies on eyewitness testimony but later adorned by imaginative embellishment. The best judgement to date concerning antecedent traditions claims the Thecla story as

we now know it arose among storytelling celibate women.³³²

“The best judgement to date”? “Storytelling celibate women”? How might have the independent women whom Rordorf envisions reacted to his characterization of them as mere “story-tellers”? Jensen also addresses the irony of such a characterization.³³³ I appreciate Haijo Westra’s comment that feminist interpretation does not always do justice to women. Rordorf’s is the best illustration to date of the sorry direction the scholarship has headed in regard to the historicity of Thekla.

Rordorf ends his rampage through both primary and secondary sources by “enumerating the [seven] points which seem to [him] established or at least debatable [by “debatable” he means at least worthy to be entertained by debate] and which ought to guide future research.” Point number four is that “the *Sitz im Leben* <of the oral tradition> is a female liberation movement.”³³⁴

Why *Not* a Historical Thekla?

I have a few questions. Why must we assume that the two narratives must *both* either be oral or written? Could not one have been oral and the other written? Aymer has shown that the two portions of the story—the Iconian and the Antiochene—differ dramatically in regard to the role of women, Christology and theology.³³⁵ Could the narratives not also have differed from each other in form and transmission? Ought we to assume that these two different narratives, dramatically different in some respects, despite similarities in regard to the events that transpire, arose out of similar contexts?

And although Tertullian rejects the text on the basis of an unsubstantiated rumour (and perhaps for purposes of his own agenda),³³⁶ is it necessary for us to accept his

opinion? And, even if the text were a fake, why then must we assume that the earlier narratives were also? Why should we rush to relegate the story of Thekla to the stuff of folklore and legend when not one of the Church Fathers *including Tertullian himself* ever challenged the historicity of Thekla, and when, as Festugière points out,³³⁷ the pilgrims who visited Hagia Thekla regarded her to be a historical figure, and when several of the details in the *ATH* reflect an accurate eyewitness knowledge of what Ramsay describes a “transitory and soon-forgotten epoch of history,”³³⁸ one only now in the last few centuries being recovered by archaeological evidence?

Festugière writes that there is nothing that authorizes us to accept Tertullian’s opinion of the work.³³⁹ Nor is there anything that obligates us to accept it. Tertullian does not veil his purpose—he objects to women teaching and baptizing and according to Thekla’s story, she did. The women in Tertullian’s congregation were claiming Thekla’s example as an authoritative precedent for their own activity. If Thekla were not a historical figure, Tertullian need simply have reminded them of that and the problem would be taken care of. But, no, he does not. He employs a weaker argument instead—that the text *about* Thekla was a fake.³⁴⁰

The majority of details in the *ATH* that Ramsay has identified as making up a historical nucleus for the story and that required firsthand knowledge of the area are connected with the Antiochene portion of the text. This portion of the narrative is the one that most strongly presents women’s solidarity, views, and actions.

Ramsay cites as true reflections of the high status and influence of women in central Asia Minor, the prayer of Thekla (that occurs only in the Syriac version and that I quote in the section on Thekla in the Syriac tradition), which she utters in the arena in

Antioch, having been stripped and wearing only a cincture, and the women's response and defense of her:

Thecla in [the prayer] speaks unconsciously as representing her whole sex; in her exposure, the nature and the rights of womanhood are outraged. A similar view is taken by the women who defended her cause: and this ethical idea, of a non-religious type, which runs through the actions is one of the strongest proofs that the tale is no artificial creation of unhistorical hagiography.³⁴¹

Ramsay argues that “even in the mutilated and re-written tale some traces of a view of women's rights and position which is thoroughly characteristic of the Asian social system, and thoroughly opposed to the ideas favoured by the Church” remain.³⁴² This may also speak to the reception of the *Miracles* as will be discussed in Chapter 13.

Ramsay argues for a primitive narrative written by an author in Galatic Phrygia in the years between 50 and 70 who had some specific first hand, but not complete, knowledge of Thekla's story. A key point, in Ramsay's argument, is the knowledge of the “the Royal Road” in the *ATh* which “is described with a minute fidelity possible only to a person” knowing the localities and first-century road system. He also points to the description of Paul contained in the *ATh*, the earliest extant account, and suggests that the “plain and unflattering account” of Paul points to a very early tradition.³⁴³ Building on Ramsay's arguments, I would add that the person who preserved this Antiochene portion of Thekla's story, was also present at the martyrial competition in Antioch. I argue this for two reasons: 1) details contained in the narrative relating to Queen Tryphaena that soon faded from public memory are only lately being confirmed by inter-disciplinary studies of primary source documents, recent archaeological discoveries, and inscriptional evidence and, 2) “unintentional evidence” related in the narrative and conforming to no

hagiographic formula or common topos, while unnecessary to the tale, is extremely specific and, in some instances, so unfamiliar that it is difficult for scholars to understand (e.g. that Queen Tryphaena was standing by the lists when she fainted, and the references to her daughter Falconilla when there seemingly is no historical record of her—as I will discuss below).

In the interest of advancing the discussion of Thekla's historicity, it is not necessary to completely set aside the witness of Tertullian. He writes that the *ATH* were a construction of earlier material:

Quodsi quae Acta Pauli quae perperam [ad] scripta sunt, [exemplum Theclae] ad licentiam mulierum docendi tinguendique defendunt, sciant in Asia presbyterum, qui eam scripturam *construxit* quasi titulo Pauli de suo *cumulans*, convictum atque confessum id se amore Pauli fecisse loco decessisse. Quam enim fidei proximum videtur ut is docendi et tinguendi daret feminae potestatem qui nec discere quidem constanter mulieri permisit? *Taceant, inquit, et domi viros suos consultant!*³⁴⁴

There, then, existed at an early date, more than one account of Thekla's story. Perhaps those earlier narratives were transmitted orally or perhaps they were written narratives or, alternatively, perhaps some were oral and some were written. If any were written narratives, they may have been written either by a man or a woman. Jensen, although sceptical in regard to female authorship of the *ATH*, writes that nothing militates against it. According to Jensen, it is methodologically appropriate when faced with an anonymous text to consciously consider whether a woman might have written it.³⁴⁵ Only one scholar, Stevan Davies, with whom I disagree on many points, suggests a female authorship.³⁴⁶

In searching for a historical Thekla, it is reasonable to focus particular attention on the portion of the *ATh* that exhibits the most historically verifiable details. That portion is the Antiochene account. It is within this section of the narrative, in the absence of other avenues of inquiry, that a historical Thekla must be sought. Queen Tryphaena is an historical figure of the Antiochene account. Tryphaena's historicity was at one time in question and there are even those who question it today despite the substantial and ever-accumulating epigraphic and numismatic evidence. Granted, one cannot prove Thekla's historicity by that of Tryphaena's, for there are countless examples of historical figures in fictive works; however, the minute and intimate knowledge of Tryphaena's life displayed by the original author/narrator of the story (which we discuss below) argues for a true and authoritative account. Additionally, Tryphaena's story answers a question in regard to Thekla that has never been addressed in the scholarship: Why, after receiving Paul's commission to take the word to "cities-not-yet-instructed,"³⁴⁷ does Thekla go to Seleucia rather than any of the other Isaurian cities between it and Iconium? I will examine these intriguing questions in the next section.

Conclusion

Thekla's historicity was never challenged by the Church Fathers regardless of their opinion of her activity in teaching and baptising. What is more, they never challenged the account of her disappearance. Hayne has demonstrated that Thekla served the Church Fathers not only as a role model of virginity and martyrdom but also of orthodoxy and that Thekla, in the *Life & Miracles*, "consistently argues for Nicene Christianity" even in her post-disappearance activity.³⁴⁸ Ps.-Basil presents Thekla's words and deeds in a way that buttresses orthodoxy. Hayne concludes that it was Thekla's

popular appeal combined with the orthodoxy accredited to her that secured her place as an officially recognized saint for seventeen centuries.³⁴⁹ Thekla became the prototype and primary model for Byzantine female asceticism.³⁵⁰ The respect accorded to her is evident in that she has occupied a place in the canon of saints for almost the entire history of the Church.

Notes to Chapter 4

³²⁷ Albrecht (1986), sect. 5.4.

³²⁸ Festugière (1968), 52-63; Ramsay ([1893] 1907), chapter 16; Jensen (1995), 80-1. Carl Schmidt ([1904] 1965), xii, who attributed no historical value to the *API*. Jensen (1995), 43, suggests that the integration of the *ATH* with the *API* ultimately had an adverse effect on upon the reception of her story.

³²⁹ I stress that it is Pisidian Antioch—because very early on, even at the time the *Miracles* were written, there was some confusion as to which Antioch was meant. Ps.-Basil attempts to address this *Life* 15.1-4. Removed as he was, however, from the original story by as much as four hundred years and without the benefit of archaeological discoveries, he connected it with Syrian Antioch. The sheer challenges of distance alone that Paul and Thekla would have faced in their itinerary had it been Syrian rather than Pisidian Antioch militates against such a conclusion. Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 426 n. 1, argues “the fact that *Syr.* (the Syriac version of the *ATH*) does not make the Syrian Antioch the scene is strong evidence in favour of the Pisidian Antioch.” He also notes that neither does it mention Daphne nor style Alexander as “Syriarch.” See also his further arguments (1907), 390-1. Finally, as we will discuss, Queen Tryphaena who figures so largely in the story of Thekla had connections with Pisidian Antioch and not to Syrian Antioch. A weak association to Syrian Antioch may be inferred through her son Polemon’s brief but pathetic marriage to Berenice (Josephus, *Antiq.* 20.7.3). See Barrett (1978) and Mitchell and Waelkens (1998) for more on Pisidian Antioch.

³³⁰ Aymer (1997), 45-61, has identified a strong male presence in the Iconian narrative of the text and argues that the Iconian narrative is mixed in gender and decidedly male dominated.

³³¹ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 381.

³³² Rordorf (1986), 43.

³³³ Jensen (1995), 79.

³³⁴ Rordorf (1986), 51f.

³³⁵ Aymer (1997), 45-61,

³³⁶ For a lively and original discussion of Tertullian’s motivations in propagating the rumour, see Reinach (1910), 124-40.

³³⁷ Festugière (1968), 61-2.

³³⁸ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 388.

³³⁹ Festugière (1968), 61.

³⁴⁰ Reinach (1910), especially 136-140, argues this point.

³⁴¹ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 403, 413.

³⁴² Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 415, also 403. Ramsay does not need to postulate a women’s liberation movement. The high position accorded women in central Asia Minor was strikingly different from other places in the ancient world.

³⁴³ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 31-3.

³⁴⁴ Tert. *De bapt.* 17. Jerome (*De script. eccles.* chap. 7) continues the propagation of the story when he writes:

Igitur Pauli et Theclae...inter apocryphas scripturas computamus. Quale enim est, ut individuus comes apostoli inter ceteras eius res hoc solum ignoraverit! Sed et Tertullianus vicinus eorum temporum refert presbyterum quemdam in Asia apostoli Pauli convictum apud Johannem, quod auctor esset libri, et confessum se hoc Pauli fecisse amore loco excidisse.

This would not be the only time Jerome may have manipulated the facts: see M. Vessey (1996).

³⁴⁵ Jensen (1995), 78.

³⁴⁶ Davies (1986) 139-43, esp. 142. Davies writes, "I conclude that the Acts were written by a woman....I believe the story of Thekla contains strong evidence for the female authorship of the API [*APTh*]." See also Davies (1980), 95-109.

³⁴⁷ *Life* 26.66.

³⁴⁸ Hayne (1994), 214. Hayne differs with Dagrón who writes that the *Miracles* "ne contiennent pas un seul echo des querelles christologiques." Dagrón (1974) 11.

³⁴⁹ Thekla's feast and cult are still officially recognized by the Eastern Church. In 1969, Thekla, along with some other saints, received a liturgical demotion from the Catholic Church but not a demotion in regard to canonicity. Thekla is still revered and celebrated particularly in Spain where she is the patron saint of Tarragon.

³⁵⁰ See Aubineau (1975), 356-63, as cited by Hayne (1994), 217, for a survey of Byzantine references to Thekla.

CHAPTER 5:

METHODOLOGY AND QUEEN ANTONIA TRYPHAENA

Textual Anchors: People, Places, and Names

In preparing the *Miracles*, his “dossier of proof” for Thekla’s post-disappearance thaumaturgical activities, Ps.-Basil explicitly anchors his text with “people, places, and names”³⁵¹ and, in so doing, provides a methodology with which to approach the story of Thekla. These textual anchors contain valuable information for reconstructing the original story of Thekla, however problematic, as yet unsubstantiated, or unlikely they may first appear.³⁵²

We, as the beneficiaries of accumulated research and discovery, possess historical insight consonant with the knowledge of the original author of the first-century document that, with the passage of time, faded from the collective memory and lay beyond the access of subsequent redactors including Ps.-Basil.³⁵³ Alterations and inaccuracies followed.

As an example, compare *Ath* 39 with the *Life* 24.15. In the first, Queen Tryphaena refers to Falconilla simply as “my child” while in the account by Ps.-Basil, the reference to Falconilla is expanded to “my only beloved daughter” with its obvious biblical overtones.³⁵⁴ It is Ps.-Basil, then, in the fifth century who limits the number of Queen Tryphaena’s daughters. As we shall see, numismatic and epigraphic evidence, however, attest to not one daughter for Queen Antonia Tryphaena, but two: Pythodoris and Gepaepyris. Another discrepancy is found in the *Life* 17.7, in which Falconilla is termed a “*paida*” in contrast to the *Ath*’s “*τέκνον*” (*Ath* 29.4) and “*θυγατέρα*” (*Ath*

31.3). If, as the historical record suggests, Queen Antonia Tryphaena had no children following the death of her husband King Cotys VIII of Thrace in 18, by the time of this scene in the *ATH*, (during Paul's first missionary journey c. 48) her youngest child would be at least thirty years old and, technically, no longer a "*paida*."³⁵⁵ Such inaccuracies may have served as stumbling blocks in the search for the historical Queen Antonia Tryphaena and, by extension, the historical Thekla.

The synthesis of the current state of knowledge, based upon archaeological and numismatic records, with that of Ps.-Basil's prescriptive formula—people, places, and names—may prove a powerful analytical tool. In this section, I will apply this synthesis to Queen Tryphaena who is presented in the Antiochene portion of the *ATH* as Thekla's *protectrix* and second mother and who is retained by Ps.-Basil in the *Life*.³⁵⁶

The identification of Queen Antonia Tryphaena with Queen (*basilissa*) Tryphaena of the *ATH* and the *Life* has been the subject of long-standing discussion. In 1864, based on his study of Pontic coins, von Gutschmidt (1890) was the first to suggest the connection. He identified Queen Antonia Tryphaena as the daughter of Polemo I, King of Pontus, Armenia, Cilicia, and Iconium, and Queen Pythodoris the granddaughter of Mark Antony. He also noted the relation of Queen Antonia Tryphaena's mother to the emperor Claudius (the mother of Pythodoris and the mother of Claudius were half-sisters) thereby establishing Tryphaena's relation to Claudius which confirms the claim in the *ATH* that Queen Tryphaena was a relative of the emperor:

But in the mean time Tryphaena, who sat upon the benches, fainted away and died; upon which the whole city was under a very great concern. And Alexander himself was afraid and desired the governor, saying: I entreat you, take compassion on me and the city, and release this woman

[Thekla], who has fought with the beasts; lest, both you and I and the whole city be destroyed. For if Caesar should have any account of what has passed now, he will certainly immediately destroy the city because Tryphaena, a person of royal extract, and a relation of his, is dead upon her seat.³⁵⁷

Von Gutschmidt argued that Queen Antonia Tryphaena and Queen Tryphaena of the *ATH* were one and the same person.

Scholars involved in the discussion include among others von Sallet (1866), Waddington (1866), Mommsen (1872), Ramsay (1892), Reinach (1910), Rostovtzeff (1919), Macurdy (1937), McKay (1972), Dagron (1978), and Barrett (1978).³⁵⁸ Dagron, however, viewed the Queen Tryphaena of the *ATH* and *Life* as a literary construct in an attempt to link local dynasts with the Queen Antonia Tryphaena of Romans 16:12. Neither did Barrett accept the connection and, along with Dagron, provided a dissenting opinion.

While scholarly opinion (apart from Dagron and Barrett) strongly supported the identification, three seeming discrepancies between the accounts contained both in the *ATH* and the *Life* and that which is known of Queen Antonia Tryphaena persisted: 1) Queen Antonia Tryphaena's unproven association with Pisidian Antioch;³⁵⁹ 2) Queen Tryphaena's statement that she had no child or relative to come to her aid;³⁶⁰ and 3) the *ATH*'s claim that Queen Tryphaena had a daughter named Falconilla.³⁶¹ The first two concerns were variously and reasonably addressed and satisfactorily explained by scholarly syntheses of archaeological discoveries and are left to be reassessed only at such time as new discoveries may bring fresh insight.³⁶² The third concern, however, remains to this day.³⁶³

Numismatic and epigraphic evidence attests the names of five children born to Queen Antonia Tryphaena and King Cotys of Thrace, three sons and two daughters all of whom bear dynastic and/or Thracian names: Rhoemetalces, Polemon, Cotys, Pythodorus, and Gepaepyris. The name Falconilla, on the other hand, is not attested in either dynastic line nor is it of Thracian origin. And, although Cotys met an untimely death, there is no indication that Queen Antonia Tryphaena ever remarried or bore more children. Indeed Strabo writes that she “lived in widowhood because she had children by [Cotys].” In this respect, she followed her mother’s example who, according to Strabo, after the death of her second husband King Archelaus of Cappadocia, also “remained in widowhood.”³⁶⁴

At a loss to reconcile the textual account of the *ATH* with the numismatic and epigraphic record, the only suggestion advanced thus far in the century and a half of scholarly discussion, is that the name Falconilla was perhaps an accommodation by an unknown second-century redactor who may have written during the proconsulship of a certain Pompeius Falco in Asia Minor in 123/4 in an attempt to somehow ingratiate himself with the proconsul.³⁶⁵

If a legitimate case for the historical Thekla is to be built upon the historicity and accuracy of the original tale, anchored as Ps.-Basil claims it to be by factual people, places, and names, the discrepancy between the historical record and the texts in regard to the daughters of Queen Antonia Tryphaena must be reconciled.

If Queen Antonia Tryphaena did not bear any children after her husband’s death in 18, by 48, the proposed date for this portion of the *ATH* based upon Paul’s first missionary journey and first visit to Iconium, her youngest child would have been at least thirty years old. All of Queen Antonia Tryphaena’s children secured dynastic marriages,

several of which are thought to have been arranged by Tiberius in 19 at the conclusion of his investigation into the murder of Cotys.

The Daughters of Queen Tryphaena

Both the *ATH* and the *Life* state that Queen Tryphaena's daughter had recently died.³⁶⁶ A review of data pertaining to Gepaepyris and Pythodoris, the daughters of Queen Antonia Tryphaena and Cotys, seems a logical starting point for this inquiry. The two daughters are attested in the archaeological record.³⁶⁷ Both were client or vassal queens of Rome: Gepaepyris was queen of the Bosporan kingdom and Pythodoris was queen of one of the two Thracian kingdoms established by Augustus in A.D. 12.³⁶⁸

In 18, the girls' father, King Cotys VIII of Thrace, was murdered by Rheuscuporis who sought possession of all of Thrace. Tryphaena fled with her children to and took up residence in Cyzicus, a major port city on the Sea of Marmara.³⁶⁹ Shortly thereafter, Tiberius opened an imperial investigation into the death of Cotys. At the conclusion of the trial, Rheuscuporis was convicted and exiled to Alexandria.³⁷⁰ The division of Thrace that had been established by Augustus and threatened by the rebellion of Rheuscuporis was reconfirmed by Tiberius who reassigned the respective portions of Thrace to the children of the former dynasts: one part to Rhoemetaces II, the son of Rheuscuporis, who had not taken part in his father's folly, and the other to the children of King Cotys and Queen Antonia Tryphaena who at that time were still minors.³⁷¹

Within two years of the trial and before 21 when civil war erupted in Thrace, Pythodoris II was betrothed to or had married Rhoemetaces II, her paternal cousin, as attested by a thank offering on behalf of the preservation of the couple during their besiegement at Phillipopolis.³⁷² Another inscription traces the couple's royal descent and

seeks their health (*ὑγίας*) and safety (*σ[ω]τηρίας*).³⁷³ The repeated concern for the safety of Pythodoris and her husband reflects the tribal rivalry and political unrest so characteristic of Thrace.³⁷⁴ Despite the discord, Rhoemetalces advanced from “dynast” to “king”³⁷⁵ (and, presumably, Pythodoris rose to assume the title of “queen”), but his political aspirations were not without opposition.³⁷⁶ There is no record of Pythodoris or Rhoemetalces after 26.³⁷⁷ Rhoemetalces is thought to have died at the hands of insurgents. No children are attributed to the couple.

During the reign of Claudius, amidst opposition,³⁷⁸ the two Thracian kingdoms were combined into the Roman province of Thrace, thus bringing Thracian monarchy to an end.³⁷⁹ Pythodoris II, the namesake of her powerful maternal grandmother, was the last known queen of Thrace. With the latest reference to Pythodoris II dating before 26, it is doubtful that she is the daughter “recently dead” (just prior to 48) to whom Queen Antonia Tryphaena refers in the *ATH*. Pythodoris may have died as much as twenty years before Thekla met Queen Antonia Tryphaena.³⁸⁰

Like Pythodoris II, her sister Gepaepyris also assumed royal title. She married the elderly Tiberius Julius Aspurgus who succeeded her grandfather Polemo I to the Bosporan throne. Polemo I died in 8 B.C. but, due to the “complex, composite character of royal power over the Bosphorus,”³⁸¹ it was not until A.D. 14 that Augustus and the senate conferred Roman citizenship to Aspurgus and confirmed him as sole ruler of the Bosphorus. The royal couple raised two sons: the name of the younger was Tiberius Julius Cotys and the name of the older, Tiberius Julius Mithridates, who was perhaps a son of Aspurgus from a previous marriage.

Aspurgus died in 37/8 at which time Gepaepyris became regent. Her coins, minted between 38-42, bear her distinctive monogram and depict her wearing a “*polos*,” a high type of crown.³⁸² Nevertheless, in 38, Caligula chose to name Polemon II, the brother of Gepaepyris, as king of Bosphorus and of Pontus.³⁸³ The decision was unacceptable to Gepaepyris and Mithridates who refused to concede their right to the throne.

In 41, Claudius returned the Bosphorus to their control.³⁸⁴ They ruled together until 45.³⁸⁵ Mithridates, desiring an autonomous kingdom, mounted a rebellion.³⁸⁶ Gepaepyris, who remained loyal to Rome, sent her son Cotys as an ambassador to Rome where he helped successfully thwart Mithridates’ aspirations.

As noted by Macurdy, Gepaepyris must be the mother about whom Cassius Dio writes as having “opposed the rebellion and attempted to flee.”³⁸⁷ There is no further reference to Gepaepyris in the sources and she is thought to have perished in the rebellion shortly before 48.

Gepaepyris’ trusted son Cotys received the Bosporan kingdom. If Gepaepyris had still been living when Cotys assumed power, we might expect numismatic or epigraphic attestation in that regard but, to date, the sources are silent. One of Cotys’ coins honours his parents. One side bears the monogram and image of his deceased father while the reverse represents his mother wearing the *polos*.³⁸⁸ Could this perhaps have been a commemorative/memorial coin?

According to the account in the *ATH*, Queen Tryphaena’s daughter Falconilla had recently died. Recall that this scene is set around 48, the date of Paul’s first missionary journey. Therefore, Falconilla died in or shortly before 48. This time frame is consonant

with what can be deduced concerning the death of Queen Antonia Tryphaena's daughter Gepaepyris but not that of Pythodoris II who may have died prior to 26.

To summarize the findings of this inquiry thus far: Falconilla, the daughter of Queen Tryphaena of the *Ath*, and Gepaepyris, the daughter of the historical Queen Antonia Tryphaena, both died shortly before 48. But for the marked difference in their names, one might posit that they are one and the same person. This deserves further consideration.

Falconilla and Gepaepyris

Having exhausted the historical and textual evidence, let us turn to a philological survey. Falconilla is a diminutive of the Latin word "*falco, falconis*" meaning falcon. Gepaepyris is a Thracian name.³⁸⁹ Only a few Thracian words and hieroglyphs are known to us, mostly in regard to place names and names of divinities. Thracian names are most frequently compounds, as is the case with Gepaepyris. "*-pyris/-poris*" means "son of" or "child of."³⁹⁰ *Geb-/Gep* is the root for the name of the Thracian solar god "Gebeleizis" (variant spellings exist). At first glance, this information sheds no light on the problem; however, the supporting evidence of Thracian hieroglyphics does. As attested by an ancient Thracian votive tablet, the hieroglyphic representation for Gebeleizis the Sun God is a falcon.³⁹¹ The falcon figures largely in Thracian mythology and persists to this day in Bulgarian cultural tradition and figure of speech.³⁹² The address, "My child, my falcon" occurs idiomatically in present-day Bulgaria.

Queen Antonia Tryphaena, as queen-consort of Thrace, chose a name for her daughter that resonated with the grand tradition of Thracian mythology and culture.³⁹³ It is understandable, however, that after the death of her husband, King Cotys, during the

family's stay in Rome for the investigation, or its extended residence in Roman Cyzicus, the unfamiliar Thracian name "Gepaepyris" should have been adapted to the more familiar Latin "Falconilla."³⁹⁴ Falconilla of the *ATH* and the historical Gepaepyris must surely have been the same person, the daughter of Queen Antonia Tryphaena.

The results of my inquiry that connect the historical Gepaepyris with Falconilla of the *ATH* meet the final reservation in regard to the identification of Queen Antonia Tryphaena with Queen Tryphaena of the *ATH*. This identification further validates the accuracy of the original story of Thekla prior to its later redactions.

By identifying the queen of the *ATH* as the historical Queen Antonia Tryphaena, I also lay to rest any lingering doubt as to whether the events occurred in either Syrian or Pisidian Antioch. Queen Antonia Tryphaena had ancestral lands near Pisidian Antioch, but she has no known connections with Syrian Antioch (apart from her son Polemon's ill-fated and short-lived marriage to Berenice).³⁹⁵

Consequently, a survey of Queen Antonia Tryphaena's life may inform and expand our knowledge of Thekla and yield surprising and unexpected insight into Thekla's chosen course of action.

Tryphaena and the Authorship of the *ATH*

As I have noted already, the Antiochene portion of the *ATH* is that which Ramsay identifies as evidencing firsthand, eyewitness knowledge and suggests an author who is native to Galatic Phrygia. It is also the older narrative of the text and that which shows the most solidarity in regard to women. And it is here that Queen Tryphaena appears in the text. I have argued that it is unnecessary to assume that the original Thekla narratives were oral rather than written. A written text presumes an educated author and results in a

search for an educated person, one familiar with the customs and geography of the area, and one sympathetic to women's concerns.

The Antiochene narrative supplies vivid details but ones unnecessary to the narrative: a detailed description of the aromatic herbs and spices which the women of Antioch used to drug the wild beasts in the arena, the exact location where Queen Tryphaena fainted, what roused her from her swoon, Tryphaena's adoption of Thekla as heir, the length of time Thekla stayed in Tryphaena's home, the teaching of the Gospel that went on in her home, and the observation that many young women of Tryphaena's household were converted. Also the following section, chapter 10 of the *ATH* in which Thekla arrives in Myra to find Paul, includes accessory, peripheral pieces of information: that the people in Myra prayed for Typhaena's happiness and, later in the narrative, that "Tryphaena had sent by the hands of Thekla large sums of money to Paul and also clothing for the relief of the poor." This part is so disconnected from the story line that Ps.-Basil did not retain it in the *Life*.

It is almost as if the Antiochene portion of the *ATH* is told from Tryphaena's unique perspective (or perhaps from that of another woman in her household). One scholar argues that the *ATH* was written by a woman.³⁹⁶ Following his argument, I would add that the best candidate for authorship is Queen Antonia Tryphaena whose presence in the text provides the reader with an intimate look at the events connected to Thekla's time in Pisidian Antioch.

The adoption of Thekla by Tryphaena does not figure significantly in the rest of the tradition but it actually has implications for the question as to why Thekla went to

Seleucia. And the fact that Thekla chose to go to Seleucia argues for her historicity. However, to date, the question has not been raised in the scholarship.

Before taking up that question, it will be helpful to acquaint ourselves with an overview of Tryphaena's life so, by way of reference, I provide provisional tables of pertinent events below, including information in regard to her father and her son Polemo.

Table 1: Provisional Table of Events for the Life of Queen Tryphaena

13-12 B.C.	Tryphaena's parents marry (Pythodoris m. Polemon). Three children are born: two sons and Tryphaena
A.D. 8	Polemon is killed.
A.D. Year Unknown	Pythodoris remarries King Archelaus of Cappadocia; Tryphaena and her brothers are raised in Cappadocia.
A.D. 12	Tryphaena, at approximately 24 years, marries Cotys VIII of Thrace.
A.D. ?	Cotys and Tryphaena have five children.
17	Tryphaena's stepfather King Archelaus dies. Tryphaena, @ 29 yrs.
18	King Cotys is murdered. T @ 30 yrs. Tryphaena flees with her children to Cyzicus and take up residence there.
18	Emperor Tiberius opens investigation of Cotys' murder. Tryphaena and family relocate to Rome during the investigation. Tiberius restores Thrace to Tryphaena.
23	Tryphaena's mother Pythodoris dies. Tryphaena @ 35 yrs.
23-37	Tryphaena succeeds her mother to the throne of Pontus. Tryphaena @ 35-49 yrs.
38	At Caligula's request, Tryphaena abdicates Pontic throne. Her son Polemon is appointed King of Pontus and the Bosphorus. Tryphaena is appointed priestess of the imperial cult of Julia Drusilla in Cyzicus. She and her two sons are benefactors in Cyzicus. Tryphaena @ 50 yrs.
42	Tryphaena, @ 55 yrs., is appointed priestess of imperial cult of Livia Drusilla.
38-45	Tryphaena's daughter Gepaepyris rules the Bosphorus singly and later with Mithradites. She mints coins from A.D. 38-42. Gepaepyris dies sometime during the Mithraditic uprising of A.D. 45.
38	Tryphaena's son Rhoemetalces, ruler of Thrace dies.
38-46	Tryphaena's daughter Pythodoris and her husband rule Thrace. There is no surviving record of them after that time.
c. 48-50	Paul's first missionary journey. He meets Thekla in Iconium. Tryphaena is converted to the Christian faith by Thekla in Pisidian Antioch. Tryphaena @ 61-63 yrs.
c. 60	Christian tradition based on Romans 16:12: Tryphaena, @ 73 yrs., joins the Christian community in Rome and "works hard for the Lord."

Table 2: Provisional Table of Events for Polemo I³⁹⁷

c. 42 B.C.	Antony establishes Polemo as king in Cilicia. Polemo retains the kingdom until the time of Antony's reapportionment to Cleopatra.	Appian, <i>Bell. civ.</i> 5.75.319
39 B.C.	Polemo also receives Iconium and Lycia	Strabo 12.6.1.568
37	Polemo assumes reign of Pontic kingdom.	
36-5	As "King Polemo of Pontus", he assists Antony in military campaign against Artavasdes I. King Polemo is taken captive and ransomed.	Cass. Dio 49.25.4 Plut. <i>Ant.</i> 36 ff., esp. 38.3
35	Polemo serves as emissary between Antony and Artavasdes II.	Cass. Dio 49.33.1-2
34	Antony annexes Armenia.	
	Antony grants Polemo a portion of Armenia Minor.	Cass. Dio 49.33.1-2 Strabo 12.3.29
31	King Polemo is not present at the Battle of Actium but sends an army to aid Antony.	Plut. <i>Ant.</i> 61.1-2
	Octavius recognizes Polemo's holdings but removes Armenia Minor.	Strabo 12.8.16.578 Cass. Dio 59.9.2
26	Polemo is enrolled among the "friends and allies of Rome."	Cass. Dio 53.25.1
14	Polemo is sent by Agrippa to quell revolts in the Bosphorus and to re-establish Pontic claims there. Polemo also marries Bosporan Queen Dynamis.	Cass. Dio 54.24.4-8.
13-12	After his short-lived marriage to Dynamis, ³⁹⁸ Polemo marries Pythodoris I (daughter of Antony's second wife Antonia) and has two sons and a daughter Antonia Tryphaena.	Strabo 12.3.29.556
A.D. 8	Polemo's reign in the Bosphorus is marked by unrest. He is killed at the hands of the Aspurgiani.	Strabo 11.2.3.493 Strabo 2.11.494

Table 3: Provisional Table of Events for Polemo II³⁹⁹

A.D. 18	Polemo's father King Cotys VIII of Thrace is killed.	Strab. 12.3.29.556 and 14.1.42
	Polemo's mother Queen Antonia Tryphaena seeks asylum at Cyzicus for her children and herself.	
18	Tiberius opens an investigation in Rome into death of Cotys.	Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 2.67
19	At Rome, Polemo and his brothers are companions of Gaius Caligula. ⁴⁰⁰	<i>IGR</i> IV. 145
	At the conclusion of the investigation, Tiberius grants a portion of Thrace to Polemo and his siblings who were "not yet adults."	Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 2.67 Strab. 12.3.29.556
28- 38	Polemo's possible "apprenticeship" as <i>dynast</i> of Cilician Olba.	Coins
	Polemo is perhaps <i>dynast</i> of Seleucia as well. Seleucian coins are minted by a "non-royal" Polemo.	Coins
38	At Cyzicus, Polemo, his mother, and brothers celebrate the festival of Caligula's sister Drusilla, "the new Aphrodite."	<i>IGR</i> IV. 145 = <i>Syll.</i> (3) 798
	Polemo and Antonia Tryphaena, each bearing the royal title conjointly issue Pontic coinage.	Coins
38	At Caligula's request, Antonia Tryphaena abdicates Pontic throne that, in turn, is granted to Polemo along with the Bosphorus.	Cass. Dio 59.12.2
41	Claudius removes Bosphorus from Polemo and grants him Cilicia in exchange.	Cass. Dio 60.8.2
	Polemo along with his mother and brothers host the Panathenaea and a tax-free fair at Cyzicus. ⁴⁰¹	<i>IGR</i> IV. 144 = <i>SEG</i> IV. 707
44	Polemo attends conference at invitation of Agrippa I along with his brother Cotys of Armenia Minor, Antiochus IV, and others.	Cass. Dio 49.12.2 Jos. <i>Ant.</i> 19.338
47	Polemo and Antiochus IV hold games in honour of Claudius.	<i>P. London</i> III.1178
48- 54	Polemo converts to Judaism in preparation for his (brief) marriage to Berenice. ⁴⁰²	Jos. <i>Ant.</i> 20.145.6
54	Polemo participated in mobilizations against the Parthian invasions in Armenia.	
60	Polemo supported the effort to install Tigranes VI of Judea as ruler in Armenia. For his efforts, Polemo either received or took a portion of Armenia.	Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 13.7 and 14.26. 1-2
	Polemo issues coins as "The Great King" and marries Julia Mamaea of Emesa. Polemo may have had two sons: Rhoemetalces & Polemo.	
64	Polemo is no longer ruling Pontus: "Ponti modo regnum concedente Polemone."	Suet. <i>Ner.</i> 18 Cass. Dio 63.1, 6-7
68	In Cilicia, Polemo issues a coin for Galba.	Coll. Wadd. 4427
69	Polemo is not present during a revolt in Pontus involving one of his freed men, "Anicetus, Polemonis libertus."	Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 3.47.1
72- 74	Cilicia becomes a province.	

Why Seleucia and Why Does It Matter?

As demonstrated in the preceding Tables, Tryphaena's family, under Polemo I, held both Iconium and portions of Rough Cilicia. As early as A.D. 28, during the reign of Tiberius or, at the latest, upon the ascension of Claudius in 41, the territory of Cilicia was again granted to them along with the adjoining temple-state of Olba and remained so until either the death or removal of Polemo II shortly before Cilicia became a province in the early 70s. For many years, Rome propagated a program of indirect rule amongst its Eastern subjects. In regard to this, Strabo comments:

*ἐδόκει πρὸς ἅπαν τὸ τοιοῦτο βασιλεύεσθαι μᾶλλον
τοὺς τόπους, ἢ ὑπὸ τοῖς Ῥωμαῖος ἡγεμόσιν εἶναι.⁴⁰³*

Ramsay notes the imperial policy of establishing “buffer-states” between Roman and Parthian territory.⁴⁰⁴ Sullivan describes the policy as having produced an “Eastern dynastic network” that produced over “200 known kings, queens, princes, and princesses in the first century before and after Christ”⁴⁰⁵ among whom were numbered Queen Antonia and Polemo II.

The various titles accorded to Polemo on Cilician coinage are seemingly ambiguous. Some of the coins bear “dynast Polemo,” some “King Polemo,” and some simply “M. Antonius Polemo,” while for Olba, coins show “Mark Antony Polemo Archpriest,” not to mention various legends on his Pontic coins. Some scholars have attempted to explain the anomaly by postulating two different kings named Polemo reigning in the same general area of Cilicia over roughly the same period.⁴⁰⁶ Josephus, however, who refers to both “Polemo who was the King of Cilicia” (*Ant.* 20.145) and

“Polemo who had dominion over Pontus” (*Ant.* 19.338), feels no need for explanation and makes no distinction between the two.

A simple explanation presents itself in regard to title or lack thereof on the coins. It should be noted that it is only the coins from Seleucia and Olba that lack royal titles for Polemo. At the time of Polemo II, Seleucia was a free city⁴⁰⁷ and Olba, an independent temple-state.⁴⁰⁸ It would be inaccurate (and would have undoubtedly been unpopular) for Polemo II as “King of Cilicia” to have represented himself as “King” either at Seleucia or at Olba, though Cilicia, Seleucia, and Olba were under his administration and protection.⁴⁰⁹ There is no known record of any ruler other than Polemo at either Seleucia or Olba at the time under discussion.⁴¹⁰

Having reviewed the evidence, let us return to the question raised earlier as to why Thekla went to Seleucia. There are a few factors to be considered. The first is a linguistic one. Paul’s directive to Thekla was to teach in “cities not-yet-instructed.” Paul preached primarily in Roman territory including Lycaonia, of which Iconium was the principal city. According to Ramsay, “where Roman government and Greek thought have gone, there Paul by preference goes.”⁴¹¹ Paul’s journeys were to take him north, west, and east. Cities to which Paul would not be going or had not gone and that were “yet-uninstructed” lay to the south among client-kingdoms, the temple-state of Olba, and the heartlands of the Isaurians. According to Ramsay, the Lycaonian and “Isaurican” dialects were essentially the same.⁴¹² Paul and Barnabas had encountered difficulty at Lystra with its Lycaonian-speaking populace.⁴¹³ Within the Lycaonia and Isauria onomastic corpus, Mitchell finds the following distribution of names: 1) indigenous, 40%, 2) Latin, 37%, and 3) Greek, 23%. He comments that the region was “one of the least civilized parts of

Anatolia, and one that strongly resisted outside influences.”⁴¹⁴ With Thekla’s fluency in both Greek (she understood Paul’s preaching and easily conversed with him) and Lycaonian, the indigenous language of Iconium and, therefore, similar to that of Isaurian, she would be able to preach and to teach both the Greek and the non-Greek speaking people of the South.

Accessibility is a second consideration. The texts do not indicate which roads Thekla travelled. Seleucia was the southernmost point of several roads that ran through the Isaurian hinterland. There was a main road that ran south from Iconium to Seleucia.⁴¹⁵ The road branched at Laranda, with one fork going west through lands and cities of Antiochus, and the other east, past Olba and through Polemo’s territory. Many other cities lay off the main route in the Isaurian hinterlands. Having forked, the two roads turned and met again at the thriving port city and cultural cross-roads of Seleucia.

A third factor is that of impact. Seleucia was a thriving port city. Though not in Thekla’s day, it would grow to be the largest city in Rough Cilicia, and though it could not rival Alexandria, Syrian Antioch, or Constantinople, it eventually was numbered among the larger centers of the East. Ward-Perkins describes Seleucia as being “a vital creative center, both a guardian of tradition and an innovator of novel visual effects.”⁴¹⁶

Strabo described the city of Seleucia as distinctly different than the surrounding region:

...Seleucia, a city well-peopled and the manners of whose inhabitants are very different from those of the people of Cilicia and Pamphylia.⁴¹⁷

According to López-Salvá, it was in Seleucia that the legacy of Greece and Rome united with that of Asia Minor, in Seleucia, in a kaleidoscope of peoples (including a large Jewish population) and races resulting in a unique religious and cultural milieu.⁴¹⁸

Ramsay writes, “The towns which [Paul] visited for the sake of preaching, were, as a rule, the centres of civilization and government in their respective districts.”⁴¹⁹ To Seleucia has been attributed a temple of Zeus, a theatre and stadium, large cisterns, quarries of Proconnesian marble, a thriving textile trade, and both a mint and a weapons factory. Under the *comes* Lauricus, the I and II Legions were stationed nearby. Following the example of Paul, Thekla carried the message of Christ south to an important cultural center.

Finally, I would advance the hypothesis that Thekla made the decision to go to Seleucia in much the same way it is generally agreed that Paul decided to go to Pisidian Antioch upon his departure from Cyprus. The proconsul Sergius Paulus, who embraced Christianity during Paul’s visit to Cyprus, had relatives near Antioch and that connection is thought to have influenced Paul’s choice of Antioch as his next destination.⁴²⁰ Stephen Mitchell writes in regard to this:

We can hardly avoid the conclusion that the proconsul himself had suggested to Paul that he make it his next port of call, no doubt providing him with letters of introduction.⁴²¹

Neither account provides a rationale for Paul’s or Thekla’s respective itineraries but it is reasonable to consider that connections with people in high places may well have been instrumental in the decision-making process for them both. It is hard to imagine that Queen Tryphaena, after having made Thekla her heir, would not have made such a suggestion nor have sent letters of introduction. Thekla chose Seleucia in large measure, I argue, because of its association with her adopted mother and protectrix Queen Tryphaena and her son, Polemo II.

Thekla's choice was both divinely directed (a cloud led her according to the *Ath*)⁴²² and circumstantially driven. Seleucia was a strategic and reasonable choice for Thekla on several counts: in regard to language, accessibility, audience and impact but also in its connection to Polemo and, by extension, to Queen Antonia Tryphaena.

By the time Ps.-Basil wrote the *Miracles*, Cilicia had long been a province and King Polemo II, undoubtedly, a figure long-forgotten.⁴²³ The application of Ps.-Basil's methodology, the use of "people, places, names" to establish credibility, provides this previously unexplored link between Thekla, Seleucia, Polemo II, and Queen Tryphaena, one that speaks to the historicity of Thekla and further anchors her story in time and space. The next chapter seeks to situate Thekla's activity in regard to place.

Notes to Chapter 5

³⁵¹ *Mir.* prologue 18-19. As will be clear in the translation, Ps.-Basil wrote both a prologue and an introduction to the *Miracles*. These two sections are distinct and will be referred to as prologue and introduction. However, I retain Dagron's line numbering throughout this thesis which, please note, is continuous between the prologue and introduction.

³⁵² For many centuries, the Hittites of biblical narratives were regarded as a fabrication until archaeology confirmed the existence of the Hittite civilization. A similarly contested case to that of Tryphaena is that of Gondophares, King of the Parthians, who reigned from 21-60. Until numismatic evidence confirmed his historicity, the only reference to him was in the *Acts of Thomas*.

³⁵³ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 381, suggests that these facts may have been lost as early as the end of the first century.

³⁵⁴ See John 3:16; Luke 3:22; Mark 1:11; Matt. 3:17; Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Mark 12:6; Gen. 22:2 and 12.

³⁵⁵ This could also be a term of affection. Cicero referred to Tullia as his little girl when she was in her twenties (Cic. *Att.* 90/4.15) and often referred to her as Tulliola (my little Tullia) when she was an adult (e.g. Cic. *Att.* 64/3.19; Cic. *Fam.* 155/14.7). I would like to thank Dr. Alison Jeppesen-Wigelsworth for this observation and these citations.

³⁵⁶ Dagron (1978), 36, contrasts Queen Tryphaena with Theokleia, Thekla's natural mother.

³⁵⁷ *Ath* 9. 14-16.

³⁵⁸ See Mommsen (1872), vol. 1, 270ff and vol. 2, 259ff.

³⁵⁹ While there is no record that Pisidian Antioch was ever among the holdings of Tryphaena's family, nearby Iconium certainly was. Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 396, suggests that the games at Antioch recorded in both the *Ath* and the *Life* were of such a magnitude that the presence of the governor was appropriate. Ramsay writes that "all the chief persons in Galatic Phrygia [which included Iconium] had come to pay their respects to him ad to the Imperial authority which he represented. Among the rest, Queen Tryphaena had come from her estates near Iconium for this great occasion." Tryphaena's family was noted for hosting games. Her maternal grandfather had been an Asiarch, an official who exercised oversight of games. See Macurdy (1937), 34; inscriptions at Cyzicus recognize Tryphaena for the Panathenaea, games, and tax-free fair that she sponsored along with her sons (*IGR* IV 144 and 147. See De Ligt (1993) 66, for further discussion of the fair); and an imperial rescript (*P. London* III. 1178) refers to games that Polemo II hosted in conjunction with Antiochus IV in honor of Claudius.

³⁶⁰ It is possible that by this time all of Tryphaena's children except for Polemo were deceased. Sullivan (1979b), 209, writes, "Presumably...Cotys died between AD 47 and AD 54. By that time his brother Rhoemetacles may also have died but Polemo still reigned in Pontus." Tryphaena may have been expressing that some of her children were deceased and that others were at a distance and unable to supply assistance.

³⁶¹ A variant, Farconila, occurs in only one ms. The Armenian text records no name for Tryphaena's daughter.

³⁶² See Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 383.

³⁶³ A further connection yet to be explored is whether Queen Antonia Tryphaena is the same Tryphaena to whom Paul (c. 57) sends greetings and describes along with Tryphosa as "women who work hard in the Lord" (Romans 16:12). It is possible that after her conversion, Tryphaena joined the Christian community in Rome and redirected her previous beneficence and patronage to acts of Christian service. See Clark (1994), 24-5, who explores how "the Church became a primary outlet for female patronage."

³⁶⁴ Strabo 12.3.29.

³⁶⁵ See Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 407, who notes the attestation of the name in Asia Minor after 130. See also Dagron (1978), 235, n. 3. Jones (1970), 103, discusses the proconsul's wife, Sosia Polla, who was honored in an inscription (during her husband's proconsulship) by the city of Phrygian Apamea. See *IGRR* 4.779 = *OGIS* 490 = *MAMA* 6.182. The couple had a daughter named Falconilla.

³⁶⁶ *Ath* 8.2/ 28.11-12; *Life* 16.21-2.

³⁶⁷ Pythodoris is known from inscriptions and was identified by Dessau. *Eph. Ep.*, IX, pp 691f; *IGR* I, 777; Gepaepyris from coinage, identified by Rostovtzeff (1919), 107ff.

³⁶⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 2.64, trans. by Sullivan (1979b), 200. *In ea divisione arva et urbes et vicina Graecis Cotyi, quod incultum, ferox, adnexum hostibus, Rheuscuporidi cessit.* "In that partition, the fields, towns, and districts neighboring those of Greece fell to Cotys; but the uncultivated, wild, adjoining enemies he granted to Rheuscuporis." The portion of Thrace granted to Cotys was closer to Pontus, the ancestral holdings of his wife, Queen Antonia Tryphaena.

³⁶⁹ Several inscriptions attest to their presence at Cyzicus including *SEG* 4. 707 (cited by De Ligt (1993, 66) from the mid-first century dedicated by merchants and other visitors at the tax-free fair and festival of Athena. See also note 369, below, on the inscription recording Rhoemetalces III. Cyzicus had provided asylum to an earlier Cotys who as an infant had been entrusted by his widowed queen mother Polemocrateia upon the death of her husband King Sadala of Thrace to the fosterage of Brutus after the assassination of Julius Caesar. Appian, *Bell. civ.* 4.75 and Tac. *Ann.* 2.67 as well as *IGR* I.775.

³⁷⁰ Rheuscuporis is thought to have been killed by soldiers. See Tac. *Ann.* 2.66f; Suet. *Tib.* 37; Strabo 12.3.29.556.

³⁷¹ Because the children of Cotys were still minors, they were put under the charge of Trebellenus Rufus, an ex-praetor, who was to manage the kingdom in the interregnum. See Tac. *Ann.* 2.67; Strabo 12.3.29.556.

³⁷² *OGIS* 378 = *IGR* I.777. θεῶ ἀγίῳ ὑψίστῳ | ὑπὲρ τῆς Ῥοιμῆ | τάκλου καὶ Πυθο | δωρίδος ἐκ τοῦ κα || τὰ τὸν Κοιλα(λ)ητικὸν | πόλεμον κινδύνου | σωτηρίας εὐξάμενος | καὶ ἐπιτυχῶν Γάιος | Ἰούλιος Πρώκ(λ)ος χαρι || στ(ήρι)ον. See also Tac. *Ann.* 3.38. Sullivan (1979b), 204 and n. 83, 206-7.

³⁷³ Dessau *IGR* 1.1503 = *IGBulg* 399. See Macurdy (1937), 48; Sullivan (1979b), 205, 207.

³⁷⁴ MacMullen (1966), 262, draws a parallel between Thrace and Cilicia, both of which insulated by their geography proved to be havens of lawlessness. Ironically, the warlike Isaurians, after their final suppression in late antiquity, were deported and resettled in Thrace (Malalas, *Chron.* 16. 107).

³⁷⁵ In the earlier inscriptions in which both Rhoemetalces and Pythodoris are mentioned by name they are untitled. See *IGBulg* 743, an inscription on which [to]u *dynastou* has been effaced and amended to *basileuontos*.

³⁷⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 3.38: "...the accusations against Trebellenus were no more violent than those against Rhoemetalces for leaving the injuries of his countrymen unavenged." (Sullivan, trans.)

³⁷⁷ Sullivan (1979b), 207, n.95, cites one possible reference to Rhoemetalces as late as 37/38 as n[eo]t[eros]

³⁷⁸ Syncellus, 631.

³⁷⁹ A wife is postulated for Rhoemetalces III, the brother of Gepaepyris and Pythodoris and who ruled the neighbouring Thracian kingdom, based on an inscription that refers to Rhoemetalces and his child (*kai ton teknon autou*). *AE* 1937 168 = *Thracia* 6 (1935) 305.

³⁸⁰ Certainly, people did outlive the last surviving record of them. For such an example, see Honigmann (1953), 174-84, in regard to the date of death for Theodoret of Cyrrhus and also for Bishop Basil of Seleucia.

³⁸¹ Rostovtzeff (1919), 109.

³⁸² For more on the coins see, Rostovtzeff (1919/rprnt. 1972), 107-8 and Macurdy (1937), 49.

³⁸³ Cass. Dio 59.12.2. The sons of Queen Antonia Tryphaena and King Cotys are described on an inscription at Cyzicus as “*συντρόφους και ἑταίρους ἑαυτῶ γεγονότας*” of Caligula having been raised with him during the investigation by Tiberius into the death of their father. This proved to be a beneficial relationship when Caligula assumed rule and granted kingdoms to Tryphaena’s sons. Also see Barrett (1990), 437 n. 2, who cites the inscription as “*SIG3 798 = IGRR IV, 145 = Smallwood, Documents, 401.*”

³⁸⁴ As compensation, Polemon was granted Cilicia in exchange for the Bosphorus (Cass. Dio 59.12 and 60.8.2). Also see Barrett (1978).

³⁸⁵ Intriguingly, Mithridates issued his own coins independently from Gepaepyris without her monogram or image but rather that of Caligula. Also see Barrett (1990).

³⁸⁶ Tac. *Ann.* XII.15f; Cass. Dio 60.8; Plin. (E.). *HN* 5.17.

³⁸⁷ Cass. Dio 60. 28.71. Macurdy (1937), 49.

³⁸⁸ *JGR* I. 876. I would like to thank Dr. Alison Jeppesen-Wigelsworth for pointing out that commemorative coins of royal parents were common in places such as Egypt under the Ptolemies with Ptolemy II issuing coins showing himself and his wife on one side and his parents on the other. The Pontic King Mithridates IV also followed this format for his coinage showing himself and his sister/wife on one side and Zeus and Hera, jugate, on the other side. For more on this usage in Pontus, see Burcu Erciyas (2006), 127.

³⁸⁹ See Macurdy (1937), 49. For Thracian onomastics see Ivan Duridanov’s posting: http://groznicat.tripod.com/thrac/thrac_4b.html

³⁹⁰ The same form is present in the name Rheuscuporis.

³⁹¹ The tablet of Gradeshnitsa is preserved in the Vratsa Regional Museum of History, Vratsa, Bulgaria. For further information go to www.institutet=science.com/en/gradsnitzae. The Thracian hieroglyphs are classified according to indices established by the British Egyptologist Alan Gardiner. The Coptic renders “child” or “son of God” as *gypi*.

³⁹² The Bulgarian spring tradition that welcomes the new sun includes the wearing of the *martenitsa*, a red and white yarn wristlet, and recalls the founding legend of Bulgaria in which a falcon plays a part. See www.wordiq.com/definition/Martenitsa for the legend itself.

³⁹³ In this Tryphaena followed her brother Zeno’s example. Upon his ascent to the Armenian throne, Zeno chose to call himself Artaxias, with its distinctly national tones (Tac. *Ann.* 2.56.2f). See Sullivan (1977), 922. Perhaps Pythodorus consciously groomed Zeno for his future role, for Tacitus writes that the boy grew up with a love for Armenian customs and culture (see Tacitus 2. 4 and 56). See Macurdy (1937), 36-7.

³⁹⁴ The adaptation may have occurred at the hand of the original author or subsequent redactor as being more “reader-friendly.”

³⁹⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.145-6.

³⁹⁶ Davies (1986) 139-43, esp. 142. Davies writes, “I conclude that the Acts were written by a woman...I believe the story of Thekla contains strong evidence for the female authorship of the API [APTh].” See also Davies (1980), 95-109. Another possibility is that Tryphaena commissioned the work.

³⁹⁷ Dates and order of events on this table are approximate and are largely based upon Sullivan (1977). All dates except the last entry are B.C.

³⁹⁸ Sullivan (1977), 919-20, notes that in regard to the marriage of Dynamis and Polemo the sources suggest that it may have been an “irregular union” and not a marriage sanctioned by Augustus.

Sullivan argues that Polemo may have already been married to Pythodoris I who would have served as regent in Pontus in his absence.

³⁹⁹ Dates and order of events on this table are approximate and are largely based upon Sullivan (1977). All dates in Table 3 are A.D.

⁴⁰⁰ Antiochus IV of Commagene and Julius Agrippa may also have been among their comrades. See Cass. Dio 59.24.

⁴⁰¹ It is unclear whether this was during the reign of Claudius or that of Tiberius.

⁴⁰² According to the *Legend of Bartholomeus*, Polemo converted to Christianity for a brief time after his marriage to Berenice. (Due to the influence of Tryphaena?)

⁴⁰³ Strabo 14.5.6.671. "It seemed better for the entire area to be ruled by kings rather than to be under the hegemony of the Romans." It was not uncommon for these rulers to have multiple holdings. See Sullivan (1979a), 8.

⁴⁰⁴ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 385.

⁴⁰⁵ Sullivan (1979a), 7. For a list of Sullivan's ten articles on that "dynastic network", see also n. 3.

⁴⁰⁶ See Magie (1950), 548-9 and Barrett (1978), 448. MacKay (1990), 2093-5, provides a thoughtful discussion of the topic.

⁴⁰⁷ In regard to Cleopatra's holdings in Cilicia that were given to Archelaus after the Battle of Actium, Strabo (14.5-6) specifically states that Archelaus did not receive Seleucia. Archelaus' kingdom passed to his son and afterwards, in 38, was granted to Antiochus IV by Caligula. Seleucia, then, was not under the control of Antiochus IV whose lands were contiguous with those of Polemo.

⁴⁰⁸ For discussion of the independent status of Seleucia and of Olba, see Mitford (1980a), 1241-3 and Mitford (1990a), 2147.

⁴⁰⁹ For Polemo's status at Seleucia, see Sullivan (1979a), 15-16.

⁴¹⁰ Strabo, (14.5.4-7) in conjunction with his remarks about Seleucia, mentions that in his time, there were those "remarkable persons" of the peripatetic philosophers, Athenaeus and Xenarchus. Mitford (1980a), 1241 n. 45, writes, "Coins bearing the names of the philosophers, Athenaeus and Xenarchus, are tantamount to a statement that under Augustus Seleucia was a free city."

⁴¹¹ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 56-7 and 482.

⁴¹² Ramsay ([1941] 1967), 200.

⁴¹³ Acts 14:11-15.

⁴¹⁴ Mitchell (1980), 1065.

⁴¹⁵ Ramsay ([1890] 1962), 358, reconstructs the route from ancient sources and the map compiled by Professor Sterret from his investigative journey in 1885.

⁴¹⁶ Ward-Perkins (1981), 304-6.

⁴¹⁷ Strabo 14.5.4. (Perseus trans.)

⁴¹⁸ López-Salvá (1972-3), 219, 225, 292.

⁴¹⁹ Ramsay ([1893] 1907), 56.

⁴²⁰ Acts 13:4-15.

⁴²¹ Mitchell (1993) vol. 2, 6-8, esp. 7. From Cyprus, a more logical destination for Paul would have been Seleucia as it was nearby, unlike Pisidian Antioch, and a vital port city that boasted a large Jewish population. It was Paul's custom to first go to the synagogue in each place with the Gospel message. For further discussion on Sergius Paulus and his connection to Antioch, see Halfmann (1979), 29-67 and inscriptions 3, 4, and 13.

⁴²² *ATH* 10.12-14, following codex G. See Lipsius and Bonnet (1891), 271.

⁴²³ According to Sullivan (1977), 927, a trace of Polemo endured in the name of the province Pontus Polemoniacus.

CHAPTER 6:
TOPOGRAPHY IN THE *MIRACLES OF THEKLA*:
RECONFIGURING ROUGH CILICIA

Rough Cilicia is generally regarded as the epicenter of Thekla's activity and the primary locus for her cult. Her story provides a unique perspective as to the contours of the region of Rough Cilicia. Based on my translation and study of the original Greek text of the *Life and Miracles of Thekla*⁴²⁴ in its entirety, the story of Thekla brings the topography of her influence and activity into sharper relief and at the same time provides a new and different mapping for Rough Cilicia, a region that experienced shifting geographical and cultural frontiers.⁴²⁵ This chapter correlates text with sites, comparing the topography of the text with the physical topography of the region in an attempt to calibrate the two, thereby opening a new window through which to view Rough Cilicia.

At the end of the *Life*, Ps.-Basil adds Thekla's commission by St. Paul to preach the Word in "yet uninstructed cities" (*Life* 26). The *Miracles* take up where the *Life* leaves off and record Thekla's post-deliverance thaumaturgical activity primarily in Seleucia and the surrounding area of the middle Calycadnus. The miracles take place mainly in cities and towns rather than in the countryside.⁴²⁶ Dagrón notes the limited geographical dispersion of the *Miracles*.⁴²⁷

Ps.-Basil presents himself as an "on-the-ground" reporter and as having written the *Miracles* in situ. He compares his activity of collecting the miracles to that of gold diggers searching the ground for precious metal (*Mir.* 28). This approach provides a pronounced and palpable physicality to the text.

Identifying himself as a historian after the manner of Herodotus, Thucydides, and the biblical writer Luke, Ps.-Basil places great importance on facts—witnesses, events, times and, in particular, places (*topoi*). Of the *Miracles* that he provides as evidence for the efficacy of Thekla’s thaumaturgical activity, as I have noted in Chapter 5, Ps.-Basil identifies the three categories—people (*prosōpōn*), names (*onomatōn*), and places (*topōn*)—as the criteria by which he intends to cement the historical accuracy of his text in the mind of his audience; in his own words, “so as to provide a careful examination of the truth for the reader” (*Mir.* prologue). The author references specific people and particular places as evidence for the credibility of his text. The text of the *Miracles* is alive with and substantiated by specific characters and is, at the same time, grounded by topography and geography.

It is intriguing that both Ps.-Basil and Egeria, the indefatigable fourth-century traveler to the Holy Land and beyond, undeniably the two most enthusiastic reporters in Late Antiquity on the *temenos*⁴²⁸ or sacred precinct of Thekla and the associated community of devotees, also share a keen interest in topography and geography.⁴²⁹ Egeria is well-known for her characteristic *ubi est* formula.⁴³⁰ Topographical and architectural terms have long been identified as two of the three significant semantic categories in Egeria’s *Itinerarium*.⁴³¹ A cursory survey of the *Miracles* suggests a similar pattern.

Indeed, one might expect to find a high incidence of topographical terms in a travel journal such as Egeria’s; Ps.-Basil is not engaged in traveling yet his text shares the same significant semantic categories with that of the *Itinerarium*. For both authors, engaged as they are in verification and documentation, topography presents a compelling case for accuracy and functions as a touch-point for truth for their respective late-antique

audiences: in Egeria's case, for her beloved sisters-in-the-faith and, for Ps.-Basil, for his educated and elite but not-yet-Christian readers.⁴³² Both authors approach their textual undertaking with great commitment.

In his recent monograph, Johnson notes "the personal, intimate investment" of Ps.-Basil in the *Miracles*.⁴³³ Although the majority of the miracles pertain to healing, healing, as Johnson has so vigorously argued, is *not* the primary focus of the text. Ps.-Basil carefully crafts the *Miracles*, including the marvelous healings, to elicit wonder for Thekla with an eye to expanding her cult, to securing a foundation legend for "his own city" of Seleucia and, in the process, to gaining recognition for himself by his association with Seleucia and Thekla, his tutelary saint.⁴³⁴ With so much at stake and given the author's attention to topography and geography, we may reasonably assume that Ps.-Basil is careful to provide accurate, first-hand knowledge about his region and that his terminology has not been employed thoughtlessly but with an eye to precision and specificity.⁴³⁵ In fact, Dagron notes that the text of the *Miracles* is distanced from mere tradition by its attention to precise geographical boundaries.⁴³⁶

Geography, as defined by Tomasch and Gilles, is "the reciprocal interaction of two associated processes—the textualization of territories and the territorialization of texts—through which land is re-presented as territory."⁴³⁷ In the *Miracles*, Ps.-Basil actively engages these processes to stake Thekla's claim to the region of Rough Cilicia (the actual confines of which will be addressed below). By means of the miracles, Ps.-Basil re-presents Rough Cilicia as territory and specifically as Thekla's territory since she serves as Christ's representative.⁴³⁸ The text of the *Miracles* helps to delineate the geographical scope of Thekla's influence and activity.

According to Ps.-Basil, Thekla's is not an arbitrary arena of activity but a divinely-appointed one. Ps.-Basil explains, "Just as Christ precisely apportioned (*διένειμεν*) specific saints specific cities and regions (*chōras*) to cleanse thoroughly, He appointed (*ἀπένειμεν*) this (*ταύτην*) <*chōran*> to her [Thekla] as He had Judea to Peter and the Gentiles to Paul" (*Mir.* 4.22-3).⁴³⁹ Note the author's choice of the word *chōra* to describe a saint's specially allotted area of activity, the significance of which will be discussed in the next section. This passage echoes a section from the *Life* in which Ps.-Basil likens Thekla's arena of activity to that of "...Peter in Antioch and mighty Rome, Paul in Athens and to all the Gentiles, and John the great theologian in Ephesus" (*Life* 28).

A similar thought is expressed by the pagan Maximus of Tyre, who writes in his *Orations*,

...not every one of the demigods does everything, for their duties are allotted to them even there, one to one demigod, another to another.⁴⁴⁰

While the concept of divinely-directed ministry is not unique to Christianity, it is foundational to it having been instituted by Jesus Christ at His Ascension by the mandate to His Apostles known today as the Great Commission:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.⁴⁴¹

The story of the Apostles' commissioning, contained in *acta*,⁴⁴² commentaries, Church histories, and even hymnody, is common to Western and Eastern, Alexandrian and Syriac tradition and persisted throughout late antiquity.⁴⁴³ It is patterned upon the

biblical account in which the Apostles cast lots to determine who should fill the ministry left vacant by Judas.⁴⁴⁴ The decision was viewed by the Apostles as having been determined by Christ Himself.⁴⁴⁵ The Old Testament book of Proverbs addresses this process: “The lot is cast into the lap but its every decision is from the Lord.” (Prov. 16:33). The various passages recording the story of the allotment of the *κλίματα τῆς οἰκουμένης* draw from a common and relatively small pool of lexical items, several of which have military overtones. The underlying suggestion in these narratives is that in the process of assignation, Christ is positioning His troops for battle (as will be addressed in more detail in the next section). Among the words used for the “allotment” each Apostle receives are *kleros* and *chōras*,⁴⁴⁶ the very word Ps.-Basil uses for Thekla’s assigned territory.

Bearing in mind that it was St. Paul who commissioned Thekla to ministry, it is instructive to note his understanding of divine assignment. Paul often refers in the Epistles to his own commissioning. It is Paul’s absolute and unwavering conviction that he was appointed by Christ as “a herald, apostle and teacher of the true faith to the Nations.”⁴⁴⁷ In Galatians, Paul expands upon this theme when he writes, “I have been entrusted with the evangelization of the uncircumcision as was Peter with the circumcision, for the One who energizes Peter as an apostle of the circumcision also energizes me to the Nations.”⁴⁴⁸ Paul compares his assignment to that of Peter in much the same way Ps.-Basil likens Thekla’s to those of Peter, Paul, and John.

Paul describes the task of evangelizing the earth as being measured out (*ἐμέρισεν*) by God in parts (*κανόνι*).⁴⁴⁹ It was Paul’s express desire to avoid preaching in any *canon* allotted to another (*ἀλλοτρίῳ κανόνι*).⁴⁵⁰ Paul describes himself as eagerly

striving to evangelize where Christ was not yet named in order that he should not build on another's foundation.⁴⁵¹

In summary, the Pauline concept of divine appointment is that individuals are chosen for (*ἐκλογος*) and entrusted with (*πιστεύμαι*) assignments by Christ.⁴⁵² In Paul's economy, Christ commissions (*προχειρίζομαι, ἐξαποστέλλω, τίθημι*)⁴⁵³ specific servants to specific tasks, to specific people groups, and to a specific region (*chōra* or *canon*).

Ps.-Basil is consistent with the biblical precedent and Christian tradition in the way he constructs Paul's commissioning of Thekla: "Therefore go away, teach the word, complete the evangelistic course and share my zeal for Christ. For this reason Christ has chosen you through me in order that He may attract you into apostleship and place in your hands some of the yet uninstructed cities" (*Life* 26).

One might ask, why, in Paul's missionary zeal, and given the fact that he traversed "the Cilician Road,"⁴⁵⁴ had he not himself evangelized nearby Rough Cilicia. Why did Seleucia remain one of the "yet uninstructed cities" at the time of Thekla's commissioning? Another *vita*, the *Life of St. Konon*, gives a possible explanation.⁴⁵⁵ Konon, like Thekla, is presented as a first-century agonistic saint in Rough Cilicia. Both Konon and Thekla were indigenous to the Luwian speaking region of Asia Minor of which Rough Cilicia was a part. Paul, being from Tarsus, was not.⁴⁵⁶ The *Life of St. Konon* records that Paul was prevented by the Holy Spirit from preaching in that area and intimates that, if truth be told, Paul was not quite up to the task of ministering to such a warlike people!

The blessed one [Konon] set forth from the region of the Isaurians, that was dominated at that time by a mad passion for the idols, so that even the great Paul who traveled the entire inhabited earth hastening to pass through their districts was hindered for a time by the Spirit, for Paul said, “Indeed, these [people] having grown wild by the autonomy of unbelief and the exceeding fierceness of the places, will not discover the *kerygma* in the present, and to force the minds of those not wishing to come to me is not mine [assignment]. And for those predisposed already towards the reception of the Word, it is not necessary to communicate an additional message.”⁴⁵⁷

According to Ps.-Basil, it is this hostile and warring region that was chosen by divine appointment as Thekla’s *chōra*. Having received her long-awaited commission, Thekla takes the road to Iconium (*Life* 26) stopping briefly to visit her mother, and then sets out for Seleucia on the Calycadnus (*Life* 27). Ps.-Basil writes that, “having reached this city and feeling pleased, she climbed the peak that was nearby and rose to the south, and made for herself a dwelling-place” (*Life* 27). It is there in Seleucia and its environs that she spends the rest of her life challenging pagan divinities, preaching the word of salvation, instructing, baptizing, enlisting people for Christ, and performing miracles (*Life* 28). In the light of divine appointment and assignment, we can regard the arena of Thekla’s activity described by Ps.-Basil in the *Miracles* as her specific *cleros*, *chōra*, or *canon*.⁴⁵⁸

Ps.-Basil’s Use of *Chōra*

Next, let us compare Ps.-Basil’s usage of the words *chōra*, *chōros*, and *chōrion*. Does the way Ps.-Basil uses the word *chōra* in the *L&M* align with its usage in the other texts I have mentioned? Are these three words used interchangeably or does each possess its own distinct semantic field within the text? The two terms *chōra* and *chōros* are used

in close proximity in the opening miracle, Thekla's confrontation with Sarpedon. Here Basil makes, if not an unconscious, a subtle distinction between Thekla's divinely-appointed region (*chōra*) and that claimed by Sarpedon for which he uses the term *chōros*. Perhaps he does so to contrast the smallness of Sarpedon's holdings with that of Thekla's or to delineate between land granted by divine-appointment and that illicitly held. Ps.-Basil considers Thekla's *chōra* to have boundaries: "The Maiden arrived in this region (*chōra*) and reached its borders" (*Mir.* 1). In the *Miracles*, the word *chōra* has a sense of allotment and specificity to it, and as being distinct from another's area. *Chōra* is also used (*Mir.* 4, 13, and 44) in a non-technical sense of countryside as contrasted to city, as it also sometimes is in the New Testament and the *Apocryphal Acts*, and, as noted, as one of its lexical meanings.

When the author refers to individual places such as Dalisandos or Thekla's *temenos* within her assigned *chōra*, he uses the word *chōros*. Apart from its reference to the site of Sarpedon's tomb (*Mir.* 1), each time Ps.-Basil uses *chōros* it is in reference to Thekla's own precinct either at Dalisandos or at Meriamlik. In the *Miracles*, *chōros* is often used in the same sense as *topos*: "not in some other *chōros*, but in the *topos*..." (*Mir.* 36). The diminutive *chōrion* is used seven times in the text. Not surprisingly, Ps.-Basil employs *chōrion* to signify much smaller places. In recounting Thekla's omniscience in regard to a theft (*Mir.* 21), Ps.-Basil writes, "Thekla revealed the place (*topos*), the spot (*chōrion*), and the thief." Ps.-Basil uses the words *chōra*, *chōros*, and *chōrion* in much the same way they are used in the New Testament, in Christian tradition, and as they are delineated in Classical Greek lexicons.

When Ps.-Basil uses the term *chōra*, he is referring to a divinely-conceptualized and delineated area assigned to an individual by Christ that is, at the same time, completely tangible and topographically identifiable with definable boundaries. Thekla's *chōra* is an area with which Ps.-Basil is confidently cognizant and completely familiar to the point that he refers to "this, our city;" "this, our region;" and other phrases such as, "our nearby Aigai." Unlike the others who wrote about Thekla, distanced as they were by space and time from her story, Ps.-Basil, an actual resident of her *chōra* and engaged in collecting miracles accomplished during or close to his own day,⁴⁵⁹ is removed neither temporally nor geographically.

Orientation in the *L&M*

Another issue worth examining in the *L&M* concerns the places that comprise Ps.-Basil's district of residence to which he refers with both considerable collective and possessive pride.⁴⁶⁰ Ps.-Basil places the *chōra* in a larger context when he refers to "those who are found close by ourselves from the East and, on the other hand, those far from us who extend from ourselves even as far as Asia" (*Mir.* 28). In the same miracle, he writes about bandits fleeing towards their own country:

It is said...that the thieves who, unfortunately for us, are our neighbors sometimes pillage our territories in the role of bandits and sometimes they appropriate everything in the function of despots and tyrants, plundering everything. Once making an incursion, they overran this sanctuary, since it was full of gold and decorated with countless other riches. Thus after having helped themselves to the consecrated possessions, they returned from there towards their country Laestrygonia overcome with arrogance and joy for the two following reasons: they had vanquished the Martyr and at the same time had become rich...In great haste they hurried off and were fleeing back towards Laestrygonia situated to the west of us and of all of the land

to the east; it was separated by many sky-high mountains, the refuge of their folly indeed! She (Thekla) confused their sense of direction, pushing them all together without difficulty and without fuss towards the East and to the plain lying at her feet, and offered them all together to the soldiers for a ready massacre.⁴⁶¹

This passage indicates that he regards his region as distinct from but oriented with the East and separated from the West by high mountains. To his mind, Asia is far; the East is close. He provides further definition, in the very next miracle, by adding that “Tarsus in neighboring Cilicia” is “the first <city> from the East to appear to those who are traveling to the East from any place on the earth” (*Mir.* 29).⁴⁶² Ps.-Basil regards his own city and region, that which he equates in the text with “ourselves” and “us,” as situated between the far West that is Asia and the near East that begins with Cilicia; and more precisely, as located between “sky-high mountains” to the west and Tarsus to the east.⁴⁶³

Within this region that Ps.-Basil personally perceives as “us” and “ourselves” lay cities that are not previously included in the story of St. Thekla as recorded in the *APT* and his *Life of St. Thekla*. With the exception of the cities of Myra and Rome, the cities cited in those two texts are included in the *Miracles*, as well as several additional cities:⁴⁶⁴ Aigai of Cilicia (*Mir.* introduction, 9, and 39); Selinous (*Mir.* 27); Olba (*Mir.* 24); Eirenopolis (*Mir.* 19; 33-35); Claudiopolis (*Mir.* 14); and Dalisandos (*Mir.* 26; 30). The last three of these cities are included in the Isaurian Decapolis of Constantine Porphyrogenitus.⁴⁶⁵ Ps.-Basil refers to Aigai, Olba, Eirenopolis, and Claudiopolis as “nearby” cities. The island of Cyprus is also included in the text (*Mir.*15).⁴⁶⁶ In addition

to Thekla's *temenos* near Seleucia, the *Miracles* also refer to churches or precincts of hers at Dalisandos (*Mir.* 26), Aigai (*Mir.* 39), and Selinous (*Mir.* 27).⁴⁶⁷

It is Cyprus and these additional cities cited in the *Miracles* but not in the *APT* that are significant in the identification of Thekla's *chōra* because they are included by Ps.-Basil in his calculated extension of Thekla's story and territory by means of the *Miracles*. Miracles, notes Greer, were an important dimension of fifth-century Christianity and strategic to the late imperial church in the proclamation of its central platform: Christ's victory over Satan. Greer writes, "Miracles helped to establish the Christian commonwealth and functioned to support it."⁴⁶⁸

Thekla Against the Pagan Gods of Rough Cilicia

Whether suppliants traveled from a particular city to Thekla's *temenos* near Seleucia or she traveled to their cities, there was an implicit, if not explicit, battle being waged by Thekla against the pagan gods associated with the respective cities. Even when Thekla healed the sophist Aretarchos at her own *temenos*, he persisted in giving credit to Sarpedon (*Mir.* 40).⁴⁶⁹ The *Miracles* may be construed as a "show-down" or "god-off" between Thekla and pagan divinities. Thekla systematically wrests power from "wrongful hands"⁴⁷⁰ restoring it to the Lordship of Christ and proving the appropriateness of her epithet *hierosylos*, desecrator of temples; hence, the repeated use of the terms *anōthen* and *authis*⁴⁷¹ and the strident, combative tone of the text.

The *Miracles*' lengthy prologue and first four miracles set the tone for the entire work. In these opening miracles, the reader encounters Thekla in pitched battle, consecutively, with Sarpedon, Athena, Aphrodite, and Zeus, all of whom she ultimately vanquishes, while throughout the remainder of the text, an implicit, subtle, and sustained

battle with Asclepius persists (underscored, perhaps, by Aigai, his special abode, being the first and last city mentioned in the *Miracles*).

Thekla's activity in the opening miracles is termed a "war effort" by Ps.-Basil. In conjunction with this, it is significant that in classical Greek the term *chōra* can refer to a soldier's post.⁴⁷² Ps.-Basil presents Thekla as a soldier for Christ stationed at her post and portrays her as achieving military dominance in the region. He writes that Thekla "made of herself a fortress against the *daemon* Sarpedon," and again "she made of herself a fortress against the warrior *daemon* of the heights—Athena." (*Life* 27). Thekla is not just a soldier at her post, but she is the fortress. Her military theatre encompasses a three-hundred and sixty degree radius around Seleucia: in the southeast, Thekla challenges Sarpedon; her competitor to the south is Aphrodite who is installed as the tutelary goddess of Cyprus; in the west and to the north, in the Isaurian hinterland, Thekla overthrows Athena; to the east, at Aigai, she challenges Asclepius; and in Seleucia proper, she ousts Zeus whose temple is thought to have stood in the midst of the city.⁴⁷³

Ps.-Basil not only advances the idea of Thekla's military prowess by highlighting her victories on a north-south-east-west axis, but symbolically, by means of the four compass points, imprints the *signum crucis* as a seal on the *chōra* assigned to Thekla by Christ Himself. The suggestion is that the territory always belonged to Christ but was misappropriated and held by counterfeit claim. Thekla's claim, however, is based on a higher authority. Thekla restores the original order of things and the *chōra* once again becomes the territory of Christ echoing the activity of the Apostles and St. Paul in their respective areas.

Paul's *Chōra* and Thekla's *Chōra*

It is striking to note that the cities Ps.-Basil introduces to the story of Thekla in the *Miracles* fall within the area circumvented by Paul on his first missionary journey.⁴⁷⁴ Leaving Antioch, Paul sailed from Syrian Seleucia to Cyprus and on to Attalia of Pamphylia. From there, by land he traveled to Perge, then to Pisidian Antioch, Iconium in Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe. At this point, if Paul had continued eastward from Derbe (rather than retracing his path as he did) along “the Cilician Road,”⁴⁷⁵ through the Cilician Gates to Tarsus and back to Syrian Antioch (an itinerary that corresponds, in reverse, to the first portion of Paul’s second missionary journey), a complete geographical loop is formed. That loop, lasso-like, encircles the cities of the *Miracles*. Where Paul’s *chōra* ended,⁴⁷⁶ Thekla’s began (see Map, below).⁴⁷⁷

It is not possible to assign a precise western boundary for Thekla’s *chōra* because St. Paul’s itinerary upcountry from Perge to Pisidian Antioch remains unidentified;⁴⁷⁸ however, Selinous, the most westerly city in the *Miracles*, lies eastward of the various routes under consideration as part of his itinerary. And, after all, it is not the countryside but rather the cities that are particularly associated with Thekla. The city-centric thrust of the *Miracles* is often noted by scholars.⁴⁷⁹ Such frequency underscores a general academic perception that polis-centricity is perhaps somewhat anomalous in this context. To the contrary, cities, “the yet uninstructed cities,” were *precisely* Thekla’s dominical commission (*Life* 26).

As discussed above, the *Vita of St. Konon* suggests that divine foresight directed St. Paul’s path away from the homeland of the Isaurians and the city of Seleucia. From such a perspective, this *chōra* with its cities was especially reserved for Thekla, and Paul,

as was his express persuasion, was prevented from preaching in another's divinely-allotted *kanon*.

Conclusion

This study has correlated the physical and textual landscape of Rough Cilicia while, at the same time, providing the added dimension of divinely-ordered and conceptualized geographical boundaries as delineated in the *L&M*. The integration of text and topography with traditional Christian thought, such as Ps.-Basil held, in regard to the allotment of the known world for purposes of evangelization, provides an alternate mapping of the region of Rough Cilicia, one that relates to Thekla's *chōra* or *kanon*, and what may, as the result of this study, be regarded as sacred Rough Cilicia.⁴⁸⁰

Notes to Chapter 6

⁴²⁴ Dagron (1978).

⁴²⁵ For detailed maps of the general area see Mitford (1980a), 1259-61; Mitchell (1993), 162; Syme (1995), 290-1.

⁴²⁶ See Dagron (1978), 110-111; Shaw (1990), 245; Johnson (2006), 139.

⁴²⁷ Dagron (1978), 33. A departure from the geographically centralized focus of the text is found in *Mir.* 12. Thekla indicates that she must hurry off to Macedonia to help a suppliant there. This, however, is added by the author more in the way of a literary flourish and also to further link the activity of Thekla with that of St. Paul. See *Acts* 16:9. Note that in the biblical account, it is a man who summons Paul while, in the *Miracles*, Thekla is going to the aid of a Macedonian woman. See also Johnson (2006), 139 and n. 41; 163, n. 64.

⁴²⁸ The term *temenos* occurs four times in the text: *Mir.* 1, 25, 27, and 36.

⁴²⁹ For Egeria's description of her visit, see Franceschini and Weber (1965), 66. 23. 1-6. See Honey (2009), 93-4, 100-1 in which I explore the ways in which Egeria's enthusiasm shapes her stylistic choices.

⁴³⁰ Campbell (1988), 32.

⁴³¹ Franceschini and Weber (1965). Swanson (1966-7), 248, notes, however, that in the *Itinerarium* temporal terms, at which Egeria excels, trump topographical ones.

⁴³² For more on the intended audience of the *Miracles*, see "Chapter 8: Genre."

⁴³³ Johnson (2006), 12.

⁴³⁴ In the epilogue of the *Miracles*, as a result of having finished his assignment to collect and record the miracles, Ps.-Basil petitions St. Thekla that he might now "be regarded highly and become significant through you [Thekla] and your grace." He also writes that he is now "seen to be someone among the preachers."

⁴³⁵ In *Mir.* 1, Ps.-Basil disdainfully cites oracular Sarpedon's "ignorance of topography"!

⁴³⁶ Dagron (1978), 25; López-Salvá (1972-3), 238, notes the precise geographical information about the city of Selinous contained in *Mir.* 27. Bovon (2003), 169, highlights "the topographical framework" and "special attention given to geography in the biblical and the extra-biblical *Acta* including the *APT*"

⁴³⁷ Tomasch and Gilles (1998), 5.

⁴³⁸ For further discussion on sacred geography, see Horden and Purcell (2000), 401-60.

⁴³⁹ *Tautēn* specifies one of the *chōrai* mentioned earlier.

⁴⁴⁰ Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 9.7.a.1 (trans. in Edelstein and Edelstein (1998), 119).

⁴⁴¹ Matt. 28:18-20.

⁴⁴² In the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: Acts of Andrew and Matthew* 1.3-5; *The Martyrion of Andrew* 1-2; *Acts of Thomas* 1.1-10; *Acts of Phillip* 94.1-6. These *acta* are contained in the *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, vol. 1 & 2.

⁴⁴³ *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*; Origen, *De principiis* 3; Clement of Rome, *Rec.* 9.29; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.i. 1-2; Ephrem, *Carm. Nis.* Hymn 42; Ruf. *HE* 2.5; Socrates, *HE* 1.19; 4.18.

⁴⁴⁴ Acts 1:15-26.

⁴⁴⁵ The dismay and consternation with which some of the Apostles received their assignments, as recorded in the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, serves to underscore the irrevocable and definitive nature of the decision. See the *Acts of Phillip* (94) 1.7, 11-14; *Acts of Thomas* 1.5-13; *Acts of Andrew and Matthew* 1.2, 6-7. Though Thomas attempted to be reassigned, the Lord's decision stood.

Matthew received his assignment with greater equanimity than did some of the other Apostles considering his *chōra*: the region of “the people-eaters”!

⁴⁴⁶ *Acts of Andrew and Matthew* 1.4-6.

⁴⁴⁷ I Tim. 2:7. See also Acts 9:15, 13:47, 22:10-21, 26:16ff; 2 Cor. 10:15-16; Eph. 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:11.

⁴⁴⁸ Gal. 2:7-8. It is interesting to note that the original distinction of “circumcised” and “uncircumcised” between the Jews and the Gentiles becomes, over time, a geographical distinction between the two halves of the Christian mission, the one centered in Palestine and the cities of the *diaspora*, and the other comprising the rest of the Mediterranean littoral and Near East, just as *oikoumene* refers to the inhabited part of the world as opposed to the uninhabited. I owe this observation to Dr. Haijo Jan Westra.

⁴⁴⁹ 2 Cor. 10:13.

⁴⁵⁰ 2 Cor. 10:15-16.

⁴⁵¹ Rom. 15:20.

⁴⁵² See Acts 9:15 and Gal. 2:7, respectively.

⁴⁵³ Acts 22:10 is illustrative here. For these verbs of commissioning, see Acts 26:16; Acts 22:21; Acts 13:47 and 1 Tim. 1:12, respectively.

⁴⁵⁴ Syme (1995), 290-1, applies the appellation “Cilician Road” to the thoroughfare that Mitford (1980a), 1238 describes as the “great strategic route from Ephesus by way of Iconium and the Cilician gates to Tarsus and so to Syria.” Buckler, as cited by Mitford (1980a), 1238, n. 36, identifies it as “the high road extending from Western Asia to Syria.”

⁴⁵⁵ Halkin (1985), 5-34. For more on St. Konon, see Halkin (1935), 369-74.

⁴⁵⁶ Thekla was from Iconium while Konon’s town was farther south at Bidana. See Halkin (1935), 372. See also Shaw (1990), 245.

⁴⁵⁷ This is my translation of the text provided by Halkin (1985), 8, sect. 4, lines 6-14. Shaw (1990, 248) describes the Isaurians as a “society locked in a state of perpetual siege.” In *Mir.* 32, Ps.-Basil perhaps is referring to the Isaurians when he writes, “Once the bandits who are our neighbours and live among us, were overrunning our country and were plundering everything here...” In so doing, he identifies the bandits as a society within his own society.

⁴⁵⁸ The term *chōra* is used to describe Claudius’ grant of Cilicia to Polemo in 41. Cass. Dio. 60.8.2. See Sullivan (1979a), 11 and n. 21. See Barrett (1978).

⁴⁵⁹ See *Mir.* prologue: “those that happened in our day or those shortly before us” and *Life* 28, in Ps.-Basil’s anticipation of his next project, collecting the miracles “continuously even up to the present day.”

⁴⁶⁰ “This my city;” “this our city” (*Mir.* 5 and 30).

⁴⁶¹ *Mir.* 28.11-30. The reference to Laestrygonia is a literary flourish by Ps.-Basil in which he likens the bandits to the legendary Laestrygonians, the cannibalistic giants of Hom. *Od.* 10.80. See Dagrón (1978), 121-2 and n. 1 and *Miracle* 28 and notes 633, 644, and 1148.

⁴⁶² Dagrón (1978), 110.

⁴⁶³ Ps.-Basil provides yet another nugget of geographical orientation when, in regard to Iconium, he writes, “And this was a city of Lycaonia, not far at all from the East but, rather, situated next to the territory of the Asians, lying at the entrance of the Pisidian and Phrygian territory.” (*Life* 1).

⁴⁶⁴ Thekla does perform a miracle in the “imperial city of Constantine” (*Mir.* 9) but it is accomplished on behalf of a bishop at Aigai, who was formerly a presbyter at Thekla’s church near Seleucia. The miracle resulted in the imperial bestowal of a church at Thekla’s *temenos*. See also Johnson (2006), 139, n. 41 and Dagrón (1978), 109. In *Mir.* 16, Thekla aids a soldier who is in distress on the road between Cilicia and Cappadocia. In this instance, there is no expressed relationship between Thekla

and the suppliant. In *Mir.* 6, Thekla comes to the aid of the city of Iconium because it was at one time her home.

⁴⁶⁵ C. Porph., *De thematibus* 77, ed. Pertusi.

⁴⁶⁶ The miracle tells of a man who, having sailed from Cyprus to attend the festival of Thekla in Seleucia, “anchored at the landing point for Isauria here.” Isauria is also implied in *Mir.* 19 in reference to a woman named Bassiane, “a hostage from the Ketis.”

⁴⁶⁷ Ps.-Basil (*Life* 15) notes that even in his day there was a sanctuary of Thekla’s in Syrian Antioch.

⁴⁶⁸ Greer (1989), 116.

⁴⁶⁹ Ps.-Basil refers to Sarpedon in *Life* 27 and *Miracles* 1, 11, 18, and 40. For a detailed discussion of Sarpedon’s name and its variants as shaped by the evolution of his cult in association with that of Apollo, see Dagrón (1978), 85-89, Johnson (2006), 123-125, López-Salvá (1972-3), 260-2, and Parke (1995) 194-6. Until a definitive study has been done, I am choosing to use “Sarpedon” in all instances.

⁴⁷⁰ Johnson (2006), 125.

⁴⁷¹ See Johnson (2006), 127 and 125, respectively.

⁴⁷² See Aesch. *Ag.* 78; Thuc. 4.126, 2.87; Aeschin. *Ep.* 3.146.

⁴⁷³ See Johnson (2006), 129.

⁴⁷⁴ Acts 13-16. Additionally, some of the cities in the *Miracles* fall within two of the five regions that Mitford (1990a), 2137, identifies as comprising Rough Cilicia: 1) The Free City of Seleucia on the Calycadnus and 2) The Region of the Middle Calycadnus, the ancient Ketis heartland, including the Isaurian Decapolis as later identified by Constantine Porphyrogenitus. Consider as well Strabo 14.5 about which Mitford (1990a), 2132 and n. 6, writes “Strabo in a loosely worded comment extends Cilicia to ‘the northern foothills [of the Taurus] about Isaura and Homonadeis as far as Pisidia’.”

⁴⁷⁵ Syme (1995), 290-1; Mitford (1980a), 1238.

⁴⁷⁶ See Giannarelli 1991, 185; 195-6. Giannarelli addresses the generally accepted attribution of Cilician Christianity to the efforts of St. Paul. She argues, instead, that the propagation of Christianity in Rough Cilicia was only indirectly influenced by St. Paul through his association with St. Thekla. Giannarelli traces what she sees as Thekla’s progression in the *ATH* from disciple, to St. Paul’s, missionary companion and, ultimately, to the role of apostle in her own right to the Cilicians.

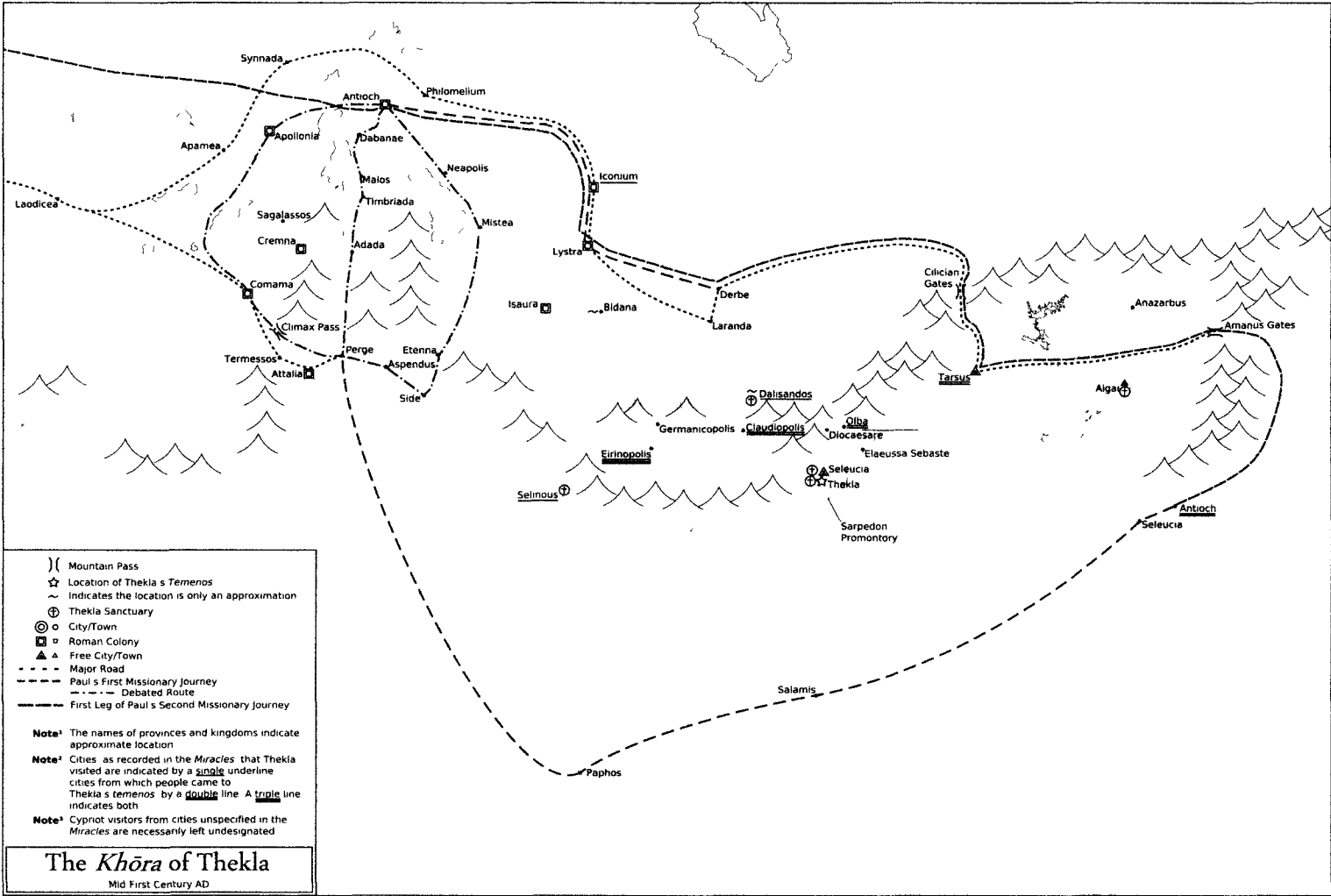
⁴⁷⁷ I sincerely wish to thank Adam Ducan for his expertise and assistance in the map-making process.

⁴⁷⁸ There are various theories as to the route of St. Paul. See Bruce (1990) 300; Mitchell (1993), 6, n. 37; Broughton (1937), 131-33.

⁴⁷⁹ See Dagrón (1978), 110-111; Shaw (1990), 245; Johnson (2006), 139.

⁴⁸⁰ In the *Miracles*, Ps.-Basil does not provide a name for Thekla’s territory of which he is a resident. In *Life* 27, he does, however, describe Seleucia as being “in the front ranks and with precedence over every city of Isauria (*Isauridos*).” (I owe this translation to Elizabeth Bryson Bongie). Egeria records passing through *Seleucia Hisauriae* on her way to *sanctam Teclam*; see Franceschini and Weber (1965), 66. 23. 1-2. I employ the phrase “canonical Rough Cilicia” irrespective of shifting provincial appellation. The area held different names over time. See Jones ([1937] 1983), 212. By Ps.-Basil’s time, Thekla’s *chōra*, excluding Aigai and Cilician Antioch, was roughly equivalent to the province of Isauria and to the ecclesiastical organization of the Byzantine Empire known as “Pamphylia G” as shown on TAVO B. VI. 12. For further thoughts on sacred geography, see Horden and Purcell (2000), 403-60. For the impact of Christianity upon the Isaurians, see Honey (2006b), 55 and n. 38.

Map: The *Chōra* of Thekla



CHAPTER 7:
HERETICISM AND SECTARIANISM

Twice in the *Miracles*, in the excommunication narrative (*Mir.* 12) and in the epilogue, Ps.-Basil makes reference to struggles that he had had or was experiencing with the hierarchy of the church at Seleucia. Although Ps.-Basil vividly expresses his outrage at the situation and his contempt for his enemies, Basil, Euboulos, and Porphyros, he provides no elaboration as to the nature of the problem(s). From those two passages, Dagron posits a “latent tension” that existed between the spiritual community at Hagia-Thekla (of which Ps.-Basil considered himself a part) and the ecclesiastical elite of the church of Seleucia.

Encratites and Apotactites at Hagia Thekla?

Dagron suggests that perhaps the Christianity at Hagia Thekla and to which Ps.-Basil adhered was sectarian in nature, and quite possibly Encratic. He bases his hypothesis upon Epiphanius’ charge that among the churches of Isauria, Pamphylia, Cilicia, and Northern Syria—an area that, according to Dagron, coincides with the geographic area of Thekla’s primary cult—there was a pervasive tradition of encratites and apotactites.⁴⁸¹

Indeed, Egeria, during her visit to Hagia Thekla in the 380s, specifically mentioned “the holy deaconess Marthana [who] “govern[ed] these monastic cells of *aputactitae* or virgins.”⁴⁸² Egeria records that she departed “after spending two days there seeing the holy monks and the *aputactitae*, both men and women who live[d] there.”⁴⁸³ She makes no mention of any encratites, however.

Encratites

But what was the Encratite movement and who were apotactites? Let us begin with the Encratites. They were adherents of a rigorously ascetic movement made up of various strands of Christianity that began in the nascent church and flourished in late antiquity, particularly at the end of the fourth and the fifth centuries. Frend compares the “severe asceticism” attached to the Encratite tradition in Syria and Mesopotamia, and which spread to the Nile Valley, to that practiced at Qumran.⁴⁸⁴

Eusebius links the proclamation of the Gospel with the ascetic impulse when he cites the ascetic Therapeutae as an outstanding example:

the number of men and women who were there [Egypt] converted at the first attempt [of the preaching of the gospel by Mark] was so great, and their asceticism so extraordinarily philosophic, that Philo thought it right to describe their conduct and assemblies and meals and all the rest of their manner of life.⁴⁸⁵

The Therapeutae were, in fact, an ascetic Jewish community but, nevertheless, the example demonstrates how closely asceticism and Christianity were linked in Eusebius’ mind. According to Goehring, “The elite ascetic life, a life above nature and beyond common human living, is so central to [Eusebius’] understanding of Christianity that it pushes itself back into his recovery of Christianity’s formative years.”⁴⁸⁶

Asceticism was an integral part of early Christian thought.⁴⁸⁷ In the classical world, *ἀσκειω* meant to “train as an athlete.” *ἄσκησις*, “training” or “practice,” was also an athletic term. Classical philosophers employed it to describe how one should train oneself for life. Christians conscripted the language of sport, according to Merkelbach, and applied it, in particular, to their martyrs.⁴⁸⁸ Poliakoff writes, “The Church, influenced

particularly by asceticism, fostered metaphorical athletic heroes.”⁴⁸⁹ The ancient athlete was expected to display self-control or *ἐγκράτεια*. Merkelbach identifies *ἐγκράτεια*, the word from which Encratite derives, as having been considered one of the chief Christian virtues. Susana Elm defines *ἐγκράτεια* as “control of the physical and emotional self to the point where one remains untouched by ‘worldly’ passions and concerns.”⁴⁹⁰ The Encratite movement,⁴⁹¹ a perfectionist tradition, exalted martyrdom and advocated sexual continence as well as abstinence from meat and wine.

Marcion and Tatian were of the Encratite persuasion.⁴⁹² Marcion (85-160), a native of Asia Minor, developed a following of Christians who rejected the Law but embraced the Gospel as the true faith. He was strongly opposed by Polycarp and other Christian luminaries of the time. Tatian “the Assyrian” (c. 160-80), a pupil of the orthodox Justin, also embraced the Encratic interpretation of Christianity.

Frend sees the monasticism of Syria and Mesopotamia (and by association, this would include the area of Thekla’s influence), which included among others the Marcionites, the Messalians, and various strands of Encratism,⁴⁹³ as being “even more exacting and individualistic than its Egyptian counterpart.”⁴⁹⁴ According to Frend, this severe ascetic impulse had few counterparts in the Western empire, with the exception perhaps of the Priscillianist movement.⁴⁹⁵ Encratism was firmly entrenched in the East, as a monastic phenomenon but it was increasingly discouraged by ecclesiastical orthodox Christianity.

Dagron suggests that encratic tendencies prevailed at Hagia Thekla. These, he argues, may well have contributed to the undercurrent of tension and hostility in the *Miracles*. An encratic persuasion on the part of the author may have been, Dagron

argues, what elicited his censure, brief excommunication, and eventual defrocking by bishops who had not emerged from the community of Hagia Thekla (as had Samos, Dexianos and John, men whom Ps.-Basil held in highest esteem). These urban bishops were the author's archenemies Basil, Euboulos, and, later, Porphyrios.⁴⁹⁶

Ps.-Basil employs the term *ἐγκράτεια* in the *Life* (7.59) in Paul's defence before the proconsul at Iconium. Paul refers to Jesus Christ as

actually being from God and being God, always being near the Father, he appeared...so that he himself might save his own design and creation...and ...that he might teach to all reverence and moderation, and also might share his counsel about purity and virginity and holy continence (*ιερωᾶς ἐγκρατατείας*)...

Ps.-Basil uses the term a second time in the *Life* (26.39) in Thekla's encomium to Paul which is rich with agonistic vocabulary:

Through you I have learned the grace of chastity (*ἀγνείας*) and virginity. Through you I have learned the advantage of abstinence (*ἐγκράτεια*) and perseverance...Through you I have learned the crowns laid away for sufferings and combat games...the prizes and honours designated to those who love Christ...

Dagron notes encratic tendencies in the *Acts of Paul*. He argues that once the *Ath* were separated from the *AP*, and thus freed from heretical connotations, specifically Encratism and Gnosticism, they enjoyed "une belle carrière byzantine."⁴⁹⁷ The *Life*, an adaptation of the *Ath*, and the *Miracles*, however, did not enjoy such a reception. Acts that had been enthusiastically read and accepted by early Christians met with "increasing hostility from the ecclesiastical establishment" in late antiquity.⁴⁹⁸ According to Johnson, the portions of apocryphal acts that displayed encratic leanings were expunged by later more orthodox redactors.⁴⁹⁹

Dagron argues that, although there is no definitive textual evidence to support the charge of Encratism, the author may well have been suspect. It is Dagron's opinion that, by imbedding the references to *ἐγκράτεια* within the speeches of Paul and of Thekla (as quoted above), Ps.-Basil attempted to nuance what he wrote in such a way that would not betray his fundamental persuasion and, in so doing, hoped to protect himself from charges of excess and sectarianism.⁵⁰⁰

Apotactites

As we have noted above, Ps.-Basil employed the word *ἐγκράτεια* in the *Life*. In the *Miracles*, he uses the verb *ἀποτάττεσθαι* from which the word "apotactite" is derived.

Dionysia, they say, had begun to bid farewell (*ἀποτάττεσθαι*) to her husband, her children, and home—to everything, to put it simply—and for that reason she had retreated to the sanctuary.⁵⁰¹

The miracle records Thekla's consolations to Dionysia in light of her personal sacrifices. From this account, we can conclude that being an apotactite involved some degree of renunciation, and in the case of Dionysia, a renunciation of everything. A cognate occurs in a similar context in the *Myrtle Wood*:

And some of the well-born women, having learned about the Virgin Thekla, withdrew to her and learned the teaching of God from her and many of them renounced (*ἀπετάξαντο*) <their previous manner of life> and lived with her.⁵⁰²

The word is used once in the New Testament in the context of renunciation: Jesus said, "Any one who does not give up (*ἀποτάσσειται*) everything cannot be my disciple."⁵⁰³ In its connection with this verse of Scripture, Judge claims a "distinctly Christian history"

for the term *ἀποτακτικός* which emerges for the first time in the fourth century both in papyri and in patristic literature as well as in a declamatory harangue by Julian the Apostate.⁵⁰⁴

The quest to identify and define the term “apotactite” has been a long one and one that has required redefinition as new evidence comes to light. References to *apotaktikoi/ai* are found in sources from Egypt, southern Asia Minor, Syria and Mesopotamia. The Egyptian sources have been studied quite extensively and help shed light on our inquiry.

In 1907, Lambert argued that a clear distinction need be maintained between the term *apotaktikoi* as found in Egyptian sources and its use in sources from Palestine and Asia Minor. The former he viewed in an adjectival sense, as a “qualifier” defining the quality of monastic life. As to the latter, Goehring provides a summary of Lambert’s definition of the *apotaktikoi* of Palestine and Asia Minor as:

a special class of Christians who chose an austere life marked by the abandonment of worldly goods, the wearing of clothing indicative of poverty and a practice of rigorous fasting and self denial.⁵⁰⁵

Judge, a later scholar, rejected Lambert’s distinction between the two groups and postulated an early apotactic movement that had originated in an urban environment and that preceded coenobitic and anchoritic traditions but that was eventually eclipsed by them and thereafter relegated to the heretical fringe of Christianity. According to Goehring, Judge’s observations, based on documentary evidence, recognized the *apotactite* as a particular (but undefined) type of ascetic, a use that paralleled that of the term “*apotaktikai*” in sources from Palestine and Asia Minor.⁵⁰⁶

From Egyptian papyri, scholars have determined that *apotaktikos* at times refers to a church *tagma* that, in time, came to include women. Egyptian papyri demonstrate that individual *apotaktikoi(ai)* could possess property and were not necessarily required to sever familial ties. Some papyri equate *apotactites* with coenobites, while others equate them with anchorites.

In Egypt, a socially interactive coenobitic monastic life (*κοινοβιώτης*) existed alongside the anchoritic life (*ἀναχωρητής*) led by the monks of the desert. Goehring rejects a “bi-polar explanation” of the Christian monastic life in Egypt which he sees rather as “a complex continuum” in which diverse images of the *apotaktikoi(ai)* play a part.⁵⁰⁷ Ἀποτακτικός is not, however, a synonym for *μοναχός*. Not all monks were apotactites.⁵⁰⁸ Judge sees the *apotaktikoi* in Oxyrhynchus as a “subclass of the *monachoi*.”⁵⁰⁹

Papyri attest to the presence of *apotaktikoi* within the coenobitic Pachomian monasteries. The *Excerpta Graeca* of the Pachomian *Rule* state that anyone wishing to enter the monastery as an *ἀποτακτικός* must first submit to training and then lay off his “worldly garments” and assume *τὸ σχῆμα τὸ ἀποτακτικόν*.⁵¹⁰

Several papyri record business and legal transactions undertaken by apotactites. The Pachomian monasteries and Shenoute’s White Monastery, which Goehring describes as an *Arbeitsgenossenschaft*,⁵¹¹ were centers of commerce and trade. Shenoute’s vision, in part, was to supply financially-challenged Coptic farmers necessities at a reduced price. Goehring attributes the success of the monastic communities in Egypt to their social and economic interdependence with the surrounding towns and villages. Some of the legal documents may be interpreted to understand the apotactite as having carried out the

transaction on behalf of the monastic community at large but other documents clearly indicate that the business pertains personally to the apotactite, man or woman as the case may be. From the papyri, it can be deduced that apotactism did not necessarily require the renunciation of all worldly goods or abstinence from business.

I appreciate Goehring's cautionary note in regard to developing paradigms for Christian practice built on literary models of asceticism alone. He argues that, driven by the impulse of *imitatio*, Christian authors may have, unwittingly or not, "reshaped the past" and "forced the future into a prescribed mold." He sees documentary evidence, such as the Egyptian legal papyri, unconcerned as they are with either the past or the future and focused on reporting specific details about the present, as helpful and unbiased supplements to scholarly investigation.⁵¹²

According to Emmett, all but one occurrence of *apotactite* in the Greek papyri appear in the context of the external affairs of a monastic community in connection with business and "civil administrative affairs." She notes that in regard to the internal affairs of a monastery, the word predominantly used for an individual monastic is *ἀναχωρητής*.⁵¹³ Emmett deduces that the term *ἀποτακτικός* and its variants may have applied to a person's position in relation to the external world. She writes, "Ἀποτάσσω...could refer to property and social relationships, and could conceivably have supplied *ἀποτακτικός* as a word of utility in civil affairs as well as expressive in church circles of the monastic ideal."⁵¹⁴

Emmett's conclusion, based on documentary evidence, is that, with the crystallization of monasticism as an institution and the subsequent acceptance and general usage of the word *μοναχός*, the term *ἀποτακτικός* "reasserted itself in a more

specialized sense”, one that was nuanced by its “original eremitic” and perfectionist undertones.⁵¹⁵

Wave upon wave of asceticism indeed fostered a Christian ethic of perfectionism, which Robin Lane Fox regards as “a constant theme of the Christian experience” and one that “in Egypt had lost none of its urgency.”⁵¹⁶ He describes apotactites as “more moderate Christian perfectionists.”⁵¹⁷ This is substantiated by Egeria’s qualification of the apotactites’ reputation for severe fasting⁵¹⁸ when she writes:

If there are some among the *apotactitae* who are not able to observe the full week of fasting throughout Lent...they take food in the middle of the week on Thursday; and those who cannot do that, fast two full days at a time during Lent; and those who cannot do that, eat every evening. No one requires that anyone fast a certain number of days but each man does as he is able; and no one is praised for doing more, nor is anyone blamed for doing less.⁵¹⁹

According to Egeria, there was not a monolithic standard of performance when it came to fasting among the apotactities. There was a standard for which to strive but that standard was determined by the individual apotactite him/herself.

A Lack of Evidence for Encratites at Hagia Thekla

In this brief survey, I have determined that there was a strong ascetic impulse suggestive of encratism and apotacticism in the region of Thekla’s *chōra*. Were these enthusiast movements part of the spiritual landscape of the community at Hagia Thekla? I noted above that Ps.-Basil employed technical terminology three times in the the *Life & Miracles* that reflects rigorous ascetic tendencies. As Dagron has observed, however, no clear, definitive conclusion can be drawn from the the *Life & Miracles* itself. The text neither explicitly precludes nor includes the presence of encratism or of a strict

asceticism at Hagia Thekla. Egeria's diary, however, bears witness to the presence of apotactites at Hagia Thekla, although it does not indicate the nature of their persuasion. Egeria's visit was in the late 380s and Epiphanius' remarks are roughly contemporary but our text was written some seventy years later. Circumstances may well have changed in the intervening years.

Several textual factors argue against an Encratite presence at Hagia Thekla:

1. The encratic beatitudes of the *Ath* are not retained by Ps.-Basil in the *Life*.⁵²⁰
2. In several of the miracles, Thekla actively works to preserve or restore marriages whereas Encratites rejected marriage.⁵²¹
3. The *Miracles* are especially noted for an unusual degree of religious tolerance while Encratism was notable for its exclusivity.
4. In her journal, Egeria makes no mention of Encratites at Hagia Thekla.

Encratism harkens back to an earlier and more primitive Christianity while references to apotactites emerge in the fourth century.

It is clear that there *were* apotactites at Hagia Thekla. Egeria writes enthusiastically about them both there and in Jerusalem. Egeria's diary is considered even to this day to be the touchstone for early church worship. According to her account, apotactites played an important part in the Jerusalem church. Judge notes that in Egeria's diary "there is frequent reference to the place of the [apotactite] in orthodox church life" and that "they appear to constitute a recognized rank in the activities of the church."⁵²² Indeed, they accompanied the bishop with songs and prayers on his Paschal progress through Jerusalem. As well, apotactites are specifically noted as having close contact with the *neophytes* or newly baptized (who received careful spiritual instruction during

their catechumenate). If the apotactites had been regarded as heretical or as a spiritually dangerous element, the church leadership, having invested so much in the training of the neophytes, would certainly have not allowed that interaction.

Egeria's most enthusiastic comment in her journal is in regard to the deaconess Marthana who was the overseer of the apotactites at Hagia Thekla. In fact, Marthana is the only individual mentioned by name in Egeria's *Itinerarium*.⁵²³ Egeria writes that Marthana, whom she had met at Jerusalem and reconnects with at Hagia Thekla, was "renowned in all the East" as to her manner of life. How can Egeria's glowing report in regard to apotactites be reconciled with Epiphanius' critical one?

One might argue, as did Lambert but rejected by Judge (as noted earlier), that the apotactites of Egypt were of a more orthodox or noble nature than those whom Epiphanius labels as heretics in Asia Minor and points eastward but Egeria makes no such distinction. She expressly links them together when, in regard to the Feast of Dedications at Jerusalem, she writes:

Many days beforehand a crowd of monks and apotactites begin gathering together from various provinces, not only from Mesopotamia and Syria, from Egypt and the Thebaid, where the monks are numerous, but also from all other places and provinces.⁵²⁴

To dismiss the witness of Egeria, an argument could be mounted that she perhaps espoused the enthusiastic asceticism of the Spanish Priscillianist movement and, as a result, was herself a sectarian sympathizer.⁵²⁵ This argument, even should it be substantiated by future scholarship, however, does not alter the privileged and integral place apotactites enjoyed in the worshipping community at Jerusalem.

Conclusion

In this section, I have provided a brief overview of encratism and apotactites, considered both Epiphanius' and Egeria's observations to such an ascetic presence in Asia Minor and environs, and searched the *Life & Miracles* for traces of such a persuasion at Hagia Thekla or on the part of the author. While there is no evidence for encratism at the *temenos* of St. Thekla, there is an apotactite tradition and presence attested both by the the *Life & Miracles* and by Egeria's *Itinerarium*. This examination identifies no concrete grounds for heresy.

To accommodate Dagron's observations in regard to an undercurrent of latent tension in the *Miracles* and in an attempt to explain the author's excommunication and dismissal as well as account for Ephiphanius' report about heretical groups in the area, one might suggest that the apotactite presence to which Ps.-Basil was attached at Hagia Thekla for some unidentified reason may have been at odds with and have come under fire from the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Seleucian church and, in turn, apart from Thekla's interventions on his behalf, the career and fortunes of Ps.-Basil himself were severely impeded.

Notes to Chapter 7

⁴⁸¹ Epiph. *Adv. haeres.* 47.1.2. Dagron (1978), 44, notes that at both the Synod of Side (383) and at the Council of Ephesus (431), Bishops Samos and John, respectively, (both had close ties with Hagia Thekla) were present. A debate ensued in regard to heretical groups such as those connected with the Encratite movement, especially the Messalians. Dagron understands this to indicate their presence in the region.

⁴⁸² Egeria, *Itin.* 23.3.

⁴⁸³ Egeria, *Itin.* 23.6.

⁴⁸⁴ Frend (1984), 146.

⁴⁸⁵ Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.16 as cited by Goehring (1999), 14.

⁴⁸⁶ See Goehring (1999), 15. There are those today who continue to dismiss Philo's witness (*On the Contemplative Life* 9:113-69) on this matter and claim the Therapeutae for Christianity.

⁴⁸⁷ For discussion on a dissenting voice in the early Church in regard to asceticism see Markus (1990), 38-40. According to Markus (38), "Opposition to asceticism had an ancestry almost as ancient as did asceticism." Among the dissenters, those who did not see "authentic Christianity in terms of some form of ascetic renunciation" and protested the notion of an "ascetic elite," Markus lists Paphnutius (c. 325), Helvidius (c. 383), Vigilantius (C. 395); and Jovian, a monk and contemporary of Jerome.

⁴⁸⁸ For a detailed study of the transference of athletic terminology to a Christian context, see Merkelbach (1975) 101-48. For discussion in particular of athletic terminology as applied to martyrs, see 113ff.

⁴⁸⁹ Poliakoff (1984), 59.

⁴⁹⁰ Elm (1994), 99.

⁴⁹¹ See Epiph. *Adv. haeres.* 47.2.3-47.3.1; Iren. *Adv. heres.* 1.28; Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.15, 7.17 and Clem. Al. *Paed.* 2.2.33.

⁴⁹² Frend (1984), 231-2.

⁴⁹³ An inscription from the late fourth century at Laodiciea makes reference to "Elaphia, deaconess of the Enkratites." *MAMA* i, xxv = *MAMA* vii, no. 69, as cited by Elm (1994), 176f and n. 117. To these various "radically enthusiastic groups," Elm (p. 195) adds the Montanists, Eustathians, and Euchitai.

⁴⁹⁴ Frend (1984), 578.

⁴⁹⁵ Frend (1984), 579. Frend cites an observation by Sozomen (c. 400) (*HE* 3.16.13) that the West had individuals who were dedicated to a life of monasticism but that there were none equal to the monks of the East. The Priscillianist movement flourished in Spain in the fourth century and continued well into the seventh century. Egeria may have had Priscillianist connections. A tradition exists that Thekla accompanied Paul to Spain.

⁴⁹⁶ Dagron (1974) 10 points out that there exists a large gap between Basil's episcopate and that of Constantine in the sixth century. He suggests that Porphyrios succeeded Basil after 468.

⁴⁹⁷ Dagron (1978), 34.

⁴⁹⁸ Johnson (2006), 107.

⁴⁹⁹ Johnson (2006), 106.

⁵⁰⁰ Dagron (1978), 43.

⁵⁰¹ *Mir.* 46.1-2.

⁵⁰² *Myrtle Wood* 99-101.

⁵⁰³ Luke 14:33. The word occurs elsewhere in the NT in the context of taking leave or of saying farewell: Mark 6:46; Luke 9:61; Acts 18:18 and 21; 2 Cor. 2:13.

⁵⁰⁴ According to Judge (1977), 79-80, in Julian's attacks upon the Cynics (*Or.* 7.224b) (whom he accused of "making small sacrifices only to get their hands on everything else, and who enjoy special attention and flattery into the bargain"), he likened them to the "*apotaktikai*, a name applied to certain persons by the impious Galileans" and whom Judge describes as "a distinct order in the churches which attracted attention by its collective practice of renunciation." In light of Julian's charge of fraud, it is interesting to note that Theodosios, in 381, in an edict prohibiting Manicheans the right to lawful assembly, included "those who defend themselves with dishonest fraud under the pretence of those deceptive names...the Encratites..." *et alia*. Also see Emmett (1982), 507-515.

⁵⁰⁵ Goehring (1992), 26.

⁵⁰⁶ Goehring (1992), 26.

⁵⁰⁷ Goehring (1992), 25.

⁵⁰⁸ Emmett (1982), 511. See P. Oxy. 3203 for the use of the term *apotactite* in subordination to the term monk. The earliest known occurrence of the term *μοναχός* is in an Egyptian legal petition of 324 in regard to a stray cow. Isidore, the plaintiff, cites as witnesses to his claim a certain deacon Antoninus and Isaac "the monk" who chanced upon the brawl that had broken out over the cow. Their appearance on the scene brought an end to the quarrel and saved Isidore's life. This first known use of the term "monk" is as a legally recognized person. See also Judge (1977), 72-89.

⁵⁰⁹ Judge (1977), 82.

⁵¹⁰ Emmett (1982), 510. Judge (1977), 86 observes that the *apotactites* adopted a distinctive style of dress, which he argues was sleeveless and most likely black, but it is unclear as to whether their attire was distinctive in its difference or in its commonness.

⁵¹¹ Goehring (1999), 49.

⁵¹² Goehring (1999), 72.

⁵¹³ Emmett (1982), 512. Frend (1984), 462, citing the *Life of Antony*, writes that "the term *anachoresis* was used in Egypt to describe both flight from debt and flight to fulfill a religious vocation."

⁵¹⁴ Emmett (1982), 512.

⁵¹⁵ Emmett (1982), 513.

⁵¹⁶ Lane Fox (1986), 602.

⁵¹⁷ Lane Fox (1986), 602.

⁵¹⁸ In the *Itinerarium*, Egeria refers to *apotactites* nine times, twice (23.3, 6) she attests to their presence at Hagia Thekla and seven times (28.3 x2; 39.3; 40.1; 41.1; 44.3; 49.1) in Jerusalem. According to Gingras (1946), 213, n. 255, Egeria seems to be "reporting the word [*apotactite*] to her correspondents as a local term," one with which they may hitherto have been unfamiliar. This strengthens our argument that the *apotactite* movement was primarily an eastern phenomenon. Gingras understands Egeria's references to mean both men and women. He also argues that because *vel* in late Latin was often employed without its earlier disjunctive force that it is difficult to determine whether Egeria includes the *aputactitae* with the *monachi* or is differentiating between them. To this, I would add that according to Swanson's lexical analysis of the *Itinerarium*, Egeria uses the word *vel* sixty-nine times. Only ten of those times does she use it in a disjunctive sense where *vel* = *aut*. Swanson postulates that over half of the occurrences of *vel* in the text are employed by Egeria in the sense of *copulandi*, where *vel* = *et*. Among these, Swanson includes Egeria, *Itin.* 49.1 "*non solum monachorum vel aputactitum;*" 23.6 "*visis etiam sanctis vel aputactis;*" and 28.3 "*virii vel feminae.*" See Swanson (1966-67).

⁵¹⁹ Egeria, *Itin.* 28.3.

⁵²⁰ As devil's advocate, one might advance the argument that Ps.-Basil expunged the beatitudes in a calculated move to veil any Encratic tendencies he might harbor.

⁵²¹ Evidence from Egyptian papyri shows that not all apotactites renounced family ties. The degree of renunciation was left to the discretion of the individual as was the degree to which an apotactite fasted, as noted above—according to one’s ability. This is similar to the Benedictine rule on fasting. See Egeria, *Itin.* 28. 3, 41.

⁵²² Judge (1977), 80.

⁵²³ For more on Egeria, see Honey (2009), 91-101; Honey and Westra (2003), 239-56.

⁵²⁴ Egeria, *Itin.* 49.1.

⁵²⁵ In support of a sectarian charge, when Egeria reached Edessa (*Itin.* 19), she welcomed a recitation of “some passages concerning Saint Thomas” assumed to be from the Acts of Thomas (see Gingras (1946), 205, n. 205), an apocryphal book particularly favoured among the Encratites and labeled “Priscillianist” by Turrilius (*Ep. Id. Cep.* 5). She writes that the priest of Edessa gave her copies of Abgar’s letters from the *Doctrine of Addai* attributed to Thaddaeus (Addai) who according to tradition was one of the “seventy disciples” (Luke 10:17) and was sent by Thomas to found a church at Edessa. Egeria writes to her sisters in the faith that they would be able to compare these copies with those that they had at home, whether they were more extensive (*Itin.* 19).

CHAPTER 8:

GENRE

Introduction to Genre

Assignment of genre includes the consideration of “literary type, form, structure, and themes.”⁵²⁶ Generally speaking, *The Acts of Thekla* and the *Life & Miracles* can be regarded as belonging to hagiography, the textual representation of the lives, deeds, and miracles of the saints. According to Krueger, the term “hagiography” is a nineteenth-century appellation, however. In the scholarship, the word “hagiography” is used in two senses: as a broad genre, and also for an individual work as a specific manifestation of the genre, or as a subgenre. In this study, I follow the accepted (double) usage.

According to Woodward,⁵²⁷ hagiography sprang from the Church’s “unique ability to translate lives into stories.” Dawes and Baynes explain that Christianity’s “conflict with evil and passionate struggle with perfection created the new type of literature [hagiography],” the prototype of which was Athanasius’ *Vita Antoni*, which over time “determined the traditional shape of the biography of the Byzantine saint.”⁵²⁸ According to Krueger, the ascetic revolution brought with it not only a new system of practices but also a new method of representing those practices: a new literary discipline was born and along with it, a new kind of author.⁵²⁹

Over time, hagiography was to grow more structured and more concerned with “describing and prescribing monastic life” and less connected with the contemporary world, according to Krueger, and because “ascetic practice and hagiographical narrative strove toward imitation and pattern” the genre gradually became “iterative and

mimetic.”⁵³⁰ It is noteworthy that Johnson⁵³¹ sees a disconnect between the *Miracles of Thekla* and later Byzantine miracle collections (see his Appendix) some of which date from as early as the sixth century. Unlike the *Life & Miracles*, many of these collections are focused primarily on healing for healing’s sake (as are the collections of Artemios and of Cosmas and Damian) and are not dependent on classical models but rather on the narrative aretology of the Gospels. The *Life & Miracles* does not exhibit the same characteristics of later hagiography. Johnson writes that he is “doubtful” as to whether the *Life & Miracles* even ought to be regarded as part of the later hagiographic tradition.⁵³² However, in the mid-fifth century, when the *Life & Miracles* was composed, “the genre was neither quite new nor yet fully theorized.”⁵³³ In the *Life & Miracles*, therefore, we encounter a new author experimenting with the forms of an emerging discipline inaugurated by Athanasius’ *Vita Antoni* which, according to Krueger (p. 5), drew its contours from Graeco-Roman biography.

Biography claimed to represent lived reality. Heffernan identifies it as the youngest of the traditional genres and a sister discipline to historiography.⁵³⁴ New Testament Gospel writers followed the conventions of biography. Thomas Brodie⁵³⁵ hesitates between calling the Gospel narratives “biographical historiography” or “historiographical biography.”⁵³⁶ According to Heffernan, sacred biography consists of two distinctive sections, *praxeis* and *ethos*, and has as its primary function a “catechetical imperative.”⁵³⁷ Hagiography, however, is not synonymous with biography. Benedicta Ward writes,

A saint’s life is not a biography; it is a highly stylized piece of writing in a different vein.... Hagiographers are concerned to show the work of God within a human life as

it relates to the person of Christ.... Hagiography is not a tentative biography but a different literary form...not a crude prelude to something better.... The central purpose of a hagiography is to present the Christ-likeness of the saint.⁵³⁸

The new genre initiated by the *Life of Antony* drew upon its biblical precedent but was also distinct from it. The name for the emergent genre (that would later be called hagiography) was slow in coming, as Krueger illustrates by the following two examples.⁵³⁹ In the sixth century, Dionysius applied the term *hagiography* to mean “the divinely inspired scriptures, not the lives of the saints” and Gregory of Nyssa (c. 381) debated whether his narrative, which today we classify as a hagiography, of the life of his sister Macrina, was a “discourse,” a “prose composition,” or a “long-winded speech.”⁵⁴⁰ Krueger further explains that it was approximately the same time as the *Life & Miracles* was composed that the first display of explicit “genre-consciousness” in regard to hagiography was articulated, when Theodoret of Cyrillus in the prologue of his *Religious History of the Monks of Syria* suggested that the new form of writing should have a place beside the traditional “classical genres: epic and history, tragedy and comedy”:⁵⁴¹

When poets and historians record acts of bravery in war, when tragedians make conspicuous in tragedy misfortunes that had rightly been hidden away and leave their memory written up, when certain others expend their words on comedy and laughter, how would it not be absurd if we let be consigned to oblivion men who in a mortal and passible body have displayed impassibility and emulated the bodiless beings?...what pardon could we reasonably receive if we do not honour their celebrated life in writing?⁵⁴²

Krueger writes, “One of the most distinctive features of Christian hagiography from its inception was its sustained references to the Bible.”⁵⁴³ It employed biblical typology, primarily implicit, as a structural feature and, in so doing, deliberately defined

itself as a post-biblical narrative form.⁵⁴⁴ Hagiographers explicitly referenced biblical types by name as models for asceticism such as Elijah and John the Baptist. Elijah, Elisha, and Moses were frequently invoked as prayer warriors, especially in the Christian literary tradition of Egypt, Cappadocia, and Syria.⁵⁴⁵ Consider these lines from St. Ephrem the Syrian:

Since Elijah repressed the desire of his body, he could withhold the rain from the adulterers. Since he restrained his body, he could restrain the dew from the whoremongers who released and sent forth their streams.

Elisha, too, who killed his body, received the dead. That which is by nature mortal, gains life by chastity, which is beyond nature. He revived the boy since he refined himself like a [newly] weaned [infant].

Moses, who divided and separated himself from his wife, divided the sea before the harlot. Zipporah maintained chastity, although she was the daughter of [pagan] priests....⁵⁴⁶

Ps.-Basil follows this convention and references the same biblical characters in the *Life & Miracles*. I will discuss later and in detail the biblical references that Ps.-Basil employs in his text.

Another characteristic of the genre, according to Krueger, is that the hagiographers often invoke the Gospel writers, thereby providing a typological connection between what the hagiographer is doing and what the Evangelists did before him.⁵⁴⁷ Theodoret of Cyrrhus does so in the prologue to his *Religious History*:

Trustworthy as writers of the Gospel teaching are not only Matthew and John, the great and first Evangelists, the eyewitnesses of the Master's miracles, but also Luke and Mark whom "the first eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word" (Luke 12) instructed accurately in not only what the Lord suffered and did but also what he taught continually.

Despite the fact that he had not been an eyewitness, the blessed Luke at the beginning of his work says that his narration concerns facts about which there is full assurance. And we, hearing that he was not an eyewitness of these very narratives but received this teaching from others, pay equal attention to him and Mark as to Matthew and John, for each of the two is trustworthy in his narration because he was taught by those who had seen. For this very reason, we too shall tell of some things as eyewitnesses and of others trusting the narration of eyewitnesses, men who have emulated (*ἐξηλωκόσιν*) their life.⁵⁴⁸

The author-orator himself cites Luke *qua* author:

Just as, therefore the admirable Luke has clearly done in the divine Gospels and in the composition about the apostles, by placing at the beginning Theophilus, to whom he dedicated also his entire work of divine writings, so therefore I shall begin the history of the Maiden.⁵⁴⁹

Krueger notes that in regard to the Coptic *vita* of Holy Menas, John IV (c. 775), patriarch of Alexandria, compares his undertaking to that of Luke's, linking his endeavour of transmitting the life and deeds of Menas to that of the Gospel writers' preservation of the accounts about Jesus:

Well has the holy evangelist Luke said, 'Many have begun to write things down but they were not able to reach the end of what they said about Him'...This, too, is the case of him that takes upon himself to utter the praises that befit this great champion of Christ, the holy Apa Menas.⁵⁵⁰

The writers of saints' lives conceptualized the Evangelists as "precursors in the task of conveying the lives of holy persons."⁵⁵¹ In adopting the model of the Gospel writers, whose writings were sacred, they placed their own writing in a flow of sacred literary composition and identified themselves with their holy forerunners. Not only did the sacred writings prescribe the pattern of hagiographic narrative but, as well, the Evangelists who composed the sacred narratives provided a model for subsequent

authorial performance. It was necessary for the hagiographer in his writings to evidence the same qualities as did his holy and inspired predecessors: such things as “plain speech, humility, obedience, and especially ascetic achievement...” if he were to legitimately function as a “conduit for divine communication.”⁵⁵² Consequently, their texts, the *Life & Miracles* included, both “encode and deploy a theology of narration.”⁵⁵³

The idea of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as writers is visually depicted not far from Seleucia and is a beautiful witness to the tradition in that area. The ceiling of the church of St. Mamas at Morphou,⁵⁵⁴ Cyprus, a few kilometres from the Bay of Morphou, one of the closest landing points from Europe and also from Hagia Thekla, includes visual representations of the traditional symbols (i.e. lion, ox, man, and eagles) for the four Evangelists each portrayed with a copy of the Gospel.⁵⁵⁵

In the developing genre of hagiography, notes Krueger (9, 122), the author took on an autobiographical position, becoming a character in the narrative himself. “Authorial self-presentation” is a feature of the new genre. The author presented himself in several different aspects such as devotee, a prophet, or a priest to the saint.⁵⁵⁶ As a result, hagiographies, writes Schulenburg, often reveal as much about their author as they do the saint.⁵⁵⁷

This was the role for Ps.-Basil, to present himself as an author and orator in the stream of divine inspiration and authority. His “performance of authorship,” according to Krueger, was “part of an elaborate act of self-positioning.”⁵⁵⁸ One way in which Ps.-Basil pursues this is by presenting himself, with the appropriate mixture of “textual modesty and awe” required by the genre, as a humble recipient of Thekla’s repeated ministrations:⁵⁵⁹

Since the miracle involving myself happened once maybe plus a second time and a third, I blush to relate it, lest someone charge me for boasting and lying; but nevertheless I will speak, focusing on the martyr herself who healed me.⁵⁶⁰

Like other hagiographers, he invokes saintly patronage for his authorial license.⁵⁶¹

Not only does Thekla attend to the health of her devotee not once but on several occasions, she also has commissioned (*ἔπειγ-/ἠπειρόμην*) (*Mir.* 12.112) his writings and moved him to the work (*κεκίνηκουϊαν*) and offers her continued assistance (*συλλήψεσθαι*) (*Mir.* 10.49-50) and approval to him. In the epilogue to the *Miracles*, Ps.-Basil reiterates that his efforts were initiated by Thekla when he addresses her with epithets that resound with all her God-given fullness and authority:

But as for me, O Virgin and Martyr of Christ and Apostle, the assignment (*ἔπιταχθέν*) you <gave> me, with holy fear—inexpressibly great—I, nevertheless, accomplished, having confidence not in myself but in you who assigned (*ἔπιταξάσῃ*) this holy work (*ἱερὸν πόνον*).⁵⁶²

After reflecting upon Thekla's intervention and deliverance for him from a debilitating ear infection, he writes,

And when I was deemed worthy of the clerical council and the register of the preachers and priests, she was beside me much <of the time>, and appearing by night she would hold out in every case some book [*βιβλίον*, scroll] or a sheet of papyrus to me that was and seemed to me a sign of her complete approval. But if I was about to say something, and she was not seen doing this, her absence was conversely significant.⁵⁶³

Krueger links this episode to the biblical account in Ezekiel in which a heavenly scroll is extended to Ezekiel. Upon his internalization of the scroll, he is enabled to both speak and write for God:

Then I [Ezekiel] looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe. And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.⁵⁶⁴

Krueger writes about this passage that the "divinely proffered text authenticates and licenses the production of additional text, serving to establish the authority and the credibility of Ezekiel's preaching."⁵⁶⁵ In Ps.-Basil's account, the divinely extended text signifies Thekla's stamp of approval and his receipt of it implies acquiescence to her divine imperative. Krueger further explains here that this episode appearing so late in the *Miracles* indicates that Thekla's approval extends not only to Ps.-Basil's writing enterprise but to his the preaching and teaching ministry as well.

Krueger sees the episode in which Ps.-Basil's finger is afflicted with anthrax as an (audacious) self-presentation by Ps.-Basil to style himself as Thekla's prophet/spokesperson after the manner of Isaiah. Krueger's analysis may be closely summarized as follows.⁵⁶⁶ Ps.-Basil's specific definition of the word anthrax as "coal" which he glosses for his audience, links him with the prophet Isaiah whose lips, having been touched by coal, were consecrated from that moment forward for uttering messages from God. The implication is that, in like manner, the finger (and, by extension, the hand) of the author, having received a touch of purifying coal (anthrax), became a chosen instrument especially consecrated to the collection and composition of Thekla's life and deeds. By this Ps.-Basil presents himself as Thekla's agent after the pattern of Isaiah and Ezekiel. The biblical context of both the coal and the scroll is in regard to divine assignment and the investiture of authority.

A third instance of “authorial self-presentation” in the *Life & Miracles*, again in the anthrax episode, markedly departs, however, from biblical reference and aligns the author with the classical world instead. The anthrax was spreading:

[B]oth the doctors and I were very afraid that the infection might spread through my entire body and endanger my life as it was especially malignant. And in the meantime, they were using the available medications to soothe the malady and to ease the terrible and unrelenting pain but as the evil was stronger than their skill and remedies, they decided to combat the infection by the scalpel and to amputate the finger and so to grant salvation to the rest of my body. Otherwise it would not be possible to survive.⁵⁶⁷

The doctors retired for the night leaving our poor author to await surgery on the next day.

Full of terror and tears, as he tells us, he had a dream:

It was still night, half-way between the decision <to amputate> and the amputation itself. Having just fallen asleep at the breaking of dawn when night is still giving up its turn and day is beginning, when it seems the two are mixed together, darkness with light, and light with darkness, behold, I saw many fearsome wasps brandishing their extended stingers like spears against me.⁵⁶⁸

The martyr appears in his dream and disperses the wasps with the corner of her mantle.

Ps.-Basil awakes delivered from both the wasps and the anthrax. The planned amputation is aborted to the amazement of the surgeons who hymn the martyr but depart a touch perturbed because they would not be receiving payment for their services.

What significance, if any, are the wasps in the author’s dream? In the Christian tradition, bees were sometimes associated with virginity. But in classical tradition bees (not wasps) “recur as a *topos* in anecdotes about the early years of Pindar and Plato” both whose lips were touched with honey signifying their future eloquence.⁵⁶⁹ Krueger writes:

Similar stories of portentous bees circulated about Homer and Hesiod, signifying the favour of the Muses.”.... “Here, with his own flying insects, the author [Ps.-Basil] associates himself indirectly, and somewhat comically, with the greats of the classical literary tradition.⁵⁷⁰

But why would the author choose wasps over bees? Krueger cites Artemidorus: “Wasps are inauspicious for all, for they signify that [the dreamer] will encounter men who are evil and cruel.”⁵⁷¹ Wasps evoke cruel and evil men—precisely what Ps.-Basil required to set the stage for the ensuing scene of the miracle!

The miracle continues with the author’s account of his excommunication by bad Bishop Basil. Ps.-Basil refers to the “most evil election [of the bishop]” and to “the evil and ruinous vote [in favour of the Bishop]” and how the newly elected bishop, encouraged by the shameless Euboulos, proceeded to pass the sentence of excommunication upon the author. The sting of the wasps portended the sting of the excommunication. Again Thekla provides assistance. Again her mantle is described (is this symbolic of her bestowing the mantle of authority to the man of her choice?).⁵⁷² When Ps.-Basil writes that his excommunication caused a “great uproar and murmuring throughout the church (*ekklesia*) and throughout the city,” it is as if he is taking his cause beyond the walls of the church and his Christian audience to the city and its school of rhetors—an audience familiar with classical allusion who would connect the wasps, the stings, and the pain inflicted by waspish Bishop Basil upon the author, one of their own rhetors, and rally to his side.

While the analogy of the wasps is suggestive of the classical literary tradition, the scrolls and coals situate the author in the biblical paradigm of the prophet. His authorial performance, replete with the requisite modesty *topos*, along with his biblical references,

and his invocation of St. Luke places him within the flow of divine authorship and his text within the genre of hagiography. To his mind, he is invested with divine authority. He has accessed and provided an amplification of the traditional text on Thekla plus he is actively engaged in providing a new text, one which he will rework several times. So far, so good. But then he is blocked by bad Bishop Basil who has his own poem on the *Life and Miracles* of Thekla.⁵⁷³ The tension lies herein: Which man is Thekla's chosen instrument and which text bears her stamp of approval? While Thekla battles Zeus, Athena, Aphrodite, and Sarpedon, Ps.-Basil has his own battle to wage. There are four arenas of conflict at work in the text: 1) between Christianity and paganism; 2) between the "old" text (*ATH*) and the new (the *L&M*);⁵⁷⁴ 3) between the author and the local bishops, Basil and Porhyry; and 4) between the ascetic tradition at the *temenos* of Thekla from whence had come the future bishops Dexianos and John and the urban ecclesiastical tradition in Seleucia and its bishops Basil and Porphyry.

Divergence from Hagiography

Up to this point in the inquiry as to the genre of the *Life & Miracles*, I have been able to place it within the parameters of hagiography. There are, however, significant ways in which it diverges from the conventions of that genre. While other individual hagiographies stress their independence from classical works, Ps.-Basil dots his text with classical quotations and even "tags" them lest they should otherwise escape notice.⁵⁷⁵ While other hagiographers emphasize their lack of skill with words and distance themselves from classical tradition, the author explicitly styles himself as a "lettered man" (*ellogimos*) (*Mir.* 37.6 and 8), and presents Thekla as a patron of the arts. While other hagiographies contain a strong element of *paideusis*, the *Life & Miracles* lacks

pedagogical intent. There is little moralizing in the text and no exhortation towards an *imitatio* of any kind. The text is noted for its unusual religious tolerance, which López-Salvá describes as “totalmente excepcional en este género literario” in that Thekla seems unconcerned when her miracles are wrongly attributed to Sarpedon or when people are not converted.

Christian hagiography introduced new categories for subjects—the weak, the poor, the ill—and privileged the poor and outcast of society.⁵⁷⁶ Yet, the author is noted for his “obsession” with social rank and prestige.⁵⁷⁷ This is evident even in the way in which he orders the miracles. He makes a conscious decision, and one explicitly stated, to privilege and showcase the miracles done on behalf of the social elite. Two thirds of the beneficiaries of the miracles are people from the upper echelons of society and an entire compositional unit of the miracles is devoted to “Thekla’s patronage of literary men, teachers of grammar and rhetoric and orators...”, “the guardians of language” as Kaster has termed them.⁵⁷⁸ The author is elitist and his writings are those of a self-conscious individual to an educated elite audience. Ps.-Basil aligns himself with the local literati.⁵⁷⁹ And he “self-credentials” by highlighting Thekla’s attention to him.⁵⁸⁰ All of these considerations signal a divergence from hagiography and, in effect, are distinctly antithetical to the spirit of hagiography with its call to humility, obedience, and “authorial self-denigration”.⁵⁸¹ Certainly, the *Life & Miracles* is a hagiography at the genre’s nascent stage but it is also something else.

Saints’ lives are often compared to Hellenistic romance novels. Some scholars suggest that the story of Thekla contained in the *ATh* and, by association, the *Life*, might be considered as a romance novel, albeit a rather one sided and inverted one notable for

Thekla's absolute dedication to St. Paul. Kate Cooper comments that this sense of "apostolic romance...lends a notoriety and magnetism to Thekla virtually unique among the heroines of the church."⁵⁸²

Clark argues, however, that hagiography is distinguished from romance novels by its pedagogical intent,⁵⁸³ and its exaltation of asceticism. Davies notes that the AAA which originated in Asia Minor "stress sexual continence as an essential feature."⁵⁸⁴ The same can be said for the majority of late antique Christian literature. Holzberg lists erotic motifs as characteristic of romance novels.⁵⁸⁵ Woodward states that "the issue for the Church fathers was not so much the identification of sex with sin but rather the positive identification of virginity with sanctity."⁵⁸⁶

Another disjuncture between the saints' lives and the romance novels was the differing perspectives of the two genres in regard to traditional boundaries. The task of the Hellenistic novel, was, as Judith Perkins describes:

to emphasize the inherent danger of transgressing the boundaries of the Greek city for its inhabitants. The genre promotes the social structures of the urban centers in the Greek east.⁵⁸⁷

Christianity by its very nature challenged traditional boundaries and regarded one's citizenship in heaven as its primary allegiance.⁵⁸⁸ According to Holzberg the novels were entirely fictitious prose stories, replete with "erotic motifs and a series of adventures which mostly take place during a journey. The protagonists live in a realistically portrayed world which often is set by the author in an age long since past."⁵⁸⁹ David Braund continues this thought, "Although they are different, histories and romances are not neatly distinguishable" for both the novelist and the historian were required to control

their imaginations if they were to be credible in the eyes of their readers.⁵⁹⁰ This same process is at work in the *Life & Miracles* and explains Ps.-Basil's penchant for anchoring his narrative in fact. And while hagiographies and romances are not always neatly distinguishable, taking the foregoing considerations into account, the *Life & Miracles* cannot be classified with the Hellenistic romance novel.

Judith Perkins' insights as to the interface of hagiography with the romance novel deserve to be quoted in full:

A basic premise of this study has been that it is difficult for us as heirs to the representational coup effected by Christianity not to view the texts of the early Christian period with simplifying hindsight, overlooking their radicalism in the light of its centrality in our own tradition. B.P. Reardon's statement in his *The Form of Greek Romance*, that the popularity of hagiography put an end to the writing of Greek romance, is therefore suggestive (Reardon 1991: 167). The eclipse of Greek romance by hagiography obviously belonged to the far-reaching ideological rearrangements that Christianity accomplished in the Greco-Roman world. Reardon's comment suggested an avenue for examining the working-out of this ideological shift in a limited representational space. Comparing the saints' Lives with the romances they replaced allows them to be historicized, set into their historical situations, so that what is distinctive about them can emerge.⁵⁹¹

Perkins' and Reardon's observations are definitive. The search to identify that "something else" at work in the *Life & Miracles* in addition to the conventions of hagiography lies elsewhere.

The *Life & Miracles'* difference and uniqueness as compared to other hagiographies have definitely been noted by scholars. Recall that Dagron observed that the *Life & Miracles* is distinct from other hagiographies. Dagron suggests that the most

striking originality of the *Miracles* is the adherence of the hagiographic text to a social reality underlying each page.⁵⁹² Gotter also notes the actual, relevant, contemporaneous nature of the miracles.⁵⁹³ Dagron identifies as a point of difference between the *Miracles* and others of the same genre that the latter accounts are “moins soucieux de contemporanéité.”⁵⁹⁴ And López-Salvá says it displays elements totally exceptional to other works of hagiography.⁵⁹⁵ Johnson considers it not to be included in the tradition of other Christian miracle collections and persuasively argues for the *Miracles* to be placed within the genre of classical paradoxography (which will be discussed below).

Alternative Genres: Beyond Hagiography

It is time to consider the implications of the insights provided by the scholars on the nature of the *Life & Miracles*. In summary, although all the scholars consider the *Life & Miracles* a hagiography, and its author a hagiographer, they regard the work as notably different from other work of the same genre. Johnson has moved a step beyond and suggested an entirely different genre for the work: that of paradoxography.⁵⁹⁶ Is the *Life & Miracles* a hagiography or a paradoxography? Perhaps it is not a case of either/or.

Dagron proposes a redactionary history for the *Life & Miracles* between 430 and 470 which roughly coincides with four Seleucian episcopates: those of Dexianos, John, Basil and Porphyry. According to Dagron, in the course of the redactions, extra miracles were added, in particular *Mir.* 12, 45, 46, and the epilogue to the collection. The first redaction ended with the awkward and disjunctive *Mir.* 44 which begins as a catalogue of godly women,⁵⁹⁷ breaks off abruptly, and then starts up with renewed vigor adding an overview of the holy men at the *temenos* as well, several of whom went on, as the author enumerates, to hold ecclesiastical office. Dagron argues, based upon internal evidence of

the text, that *Mir.* 12 was added during the second redaction somewhere between 448 and 468 during the time that bad Bishop Basil (he assumed the episcopate in 440) held office. Recall that *Mir.* 12, the anthrax episode, is the miracle in which the self-presentation of the author in regard to attention from Thekla and his status in the ecclesiastical *cursus honorum* are highlighted. *Mir.* 45 and 46 are miracles about women, carrying on the initial topic of *Mir.* 44 and can be regarded as later additions. The epilogue (added in the final redaction, along with miracles 45 & 46, during the bishopric of Porphyry) is an impassioned plea for Thekla's deliverance of the church from ungodly leadership and a heartfelt supplication by the author that he be reinstated. The redactions coincide with changes in the author's career.

Gotter enumerates the miracles in which the social elite are the recipients of Thekla's patronage. They fall into two groups which flank the central core of miracles, one group appearing at the beginning of the collection right after the four miracles of Thekla's battles with the *daemones*, the other at the end of the collection before the five miracles about women.⁵⁹⁸ Could these, like the additions discussed above, have also been added in one of the redactions?

Synthesizing and building upon the observations of scholars before me, I advance the suggestion that the redactions sprang from Ps.-Basil's response to the battles that developed between bad Bishop Basil, and later Bishop Porphyry, and himself. The additions to the *Life & Miracles* sprang from a different motivation than the original composition, addressed a different audience (as will be discussed next) and consequently required a different literary strategy.

Ps.-Basil's strategy was to make Thekla's activity appear immediate and relevant particularly in relation to himself. That required a delicate balance. Gotter states that Ps.-Basil cites the classical authors while distancing himself from them.⁵⁹⁹ By presenting himself as a frequent recipient of Thekla's mercies and ministrations he is reinforcing the notion that he has a special connection to Thekla. That she appears to him in visions strengthens that connection for it confers a personal distinction and implies that he speaks for her. He specifically states, in the prologue to the *Miracles*, that he is writing so that his readers, upon examining the evidence, might harvest belief; consequently, he writes for a non-believing audience. He dare not offend them; he must woo them. To do this demands a display of religious tolerance; there is little room for moralizing or demands for blind adherence to the faith.

The Audience

Indeed, Ps.-Basil is writing a hagiography, a saint's life and deeds, designed to appeal to the church and ensure his position within it; at the same time, however, in his desire to expand the cult of Thekla, he is also reaching out to a classically trained audience, the local literati, that they might be won to the faith:

...that they might harvest belief from the miracles being performed now and from those already performed and from her earlier struggles and trials. For this reason, we have mentioned persons, places, and names so that our readers (*ἐντυγχάνοντας*) will not only have no doubts about her miracles and life, but also will be able to have close at hand <the evidence> and to examine for themselves the truth of what we have said.⁶⁰⁰

He wrote for the rhetors of Seleucia largely because that was his orientation; he, too, was an orator. An additional underlying motive may have been a desire on his part to

conscript them as a support base in his battle against Basil. For this educated audience, Thekla needs be presented, unlike other saints, as a patroness of the Arts (as will be addressed in the following chapter on structure).

Ps.-Basil is writing for two audiences at one and the same time. Such a task demands something more than just a hagiography. How Ps.-Basil chooses to achieve this can explain the departure of the work from the hagiographic model. The idea of a two-pronged thrust to accommodate his double or split audience provides an explanation as to why the prologue of the *Miracles* contains two parts: the one with its many classical allusions and, the other, with its biblical references; the former designed for a non-believing, classically educated audience, and the latter, for his Christian readers. The *Miracles* themselves sometimes exhibit the juxtaposition of Homeric or classical verse⁶⁰¹ with biblical quotations or allusion. From what we see at work in the *Miracles*, perhaps an important determining factor in the designation of genre ought to be that of the intended audience.⁶⁰²

The question remains as to the nature of what it was that Ps.-Basil added to his miracle collection. All scholars agree that the *Life & Miracles* belongs to a subset of historiography. Ps.-Basil himself places the work in the flow of historiography by explicitly invoking Herodotos and Thucydides in the prologue to the *Life* and uses the word *historia* several times in reference to his composition. Many scholars are content at placing the *Life & Miracles* within the genre of hagiography, as a subgenre of biography, which in turn is the younger sister of historiography. Dagrón, without exploring the implications of the term, fittingly refers to Ps.-Basil as “le rhéteur-hagioraphe.”⁶⁰³ Certainly the subject and many of the conventions of the *Life & Miracles* qualify it as a

hagiographic work; but perhaps more thought should be given to Dagron's observation that the *Life & Miracles* hardly has an equivalent in hagiography.⁶⁰⁴ Perhaps that is because there is something more to be considered.⁶⁰⁵

Paradoxography

Johnson moves beyond Dagron and other scholars by situating the *Life & Miracles* within the literary historical context of paradoxography, an established subgenre of historiography in Late Antiquity that reached back to Herodotus (468 B.C.) (whom Ps.-Basil explicitly evokes in the prologue to the *Life* and implicitly in the prologue to the *Miracles*), was propagated by Callimachus (c. 305-240 B.C.) and Antigonus of Carystus (fl. 240 B.C.), employed by Phlegon of Tralles *Π. Θαυμασίων* (c. A.D. 100), continued in Aelianus Claudius' *Ποικίλη ιστορία* (c. A.D. 170-240), manifested itself among Christian authors in the encyclopaedic miscellany on a wide range of subjects of Julius Africanus' *Κεστοί* (c. A.D. 160-240), and endured well into the sixth century A.D.⁶⁰⁶ All of these texts, including the *Life & Miracles*, share a paratactic structure and the vocabulary of wonder that has as its operative words *thauma* and its derivatives. The presence of these words in the *Miracles* will be discussed in Chapter 12. Johnson is insistent that the intent of the author is to inspire *thauma* for Thekla.⁶⁰⁷ Through his miracle collection, Ps.-Basil sought to elicit a collective fascination for Thekla. The collection differs from a typical hagiography in that it functions for its audience as a series of *admiranda* rather than *imitanda*.⁶⁰⁸ It is an important distinction and one that situates the *Life & Miracles* in the tradition of paradoxography. The *Life & Miracles* differs from paradoxographical collections, however, in regard to its spiritual dimension and in that it focuses on just one subject: Thekla. The spiritual dimension, missing from

other paradoxographical works, is accommodated in the *Life & Miracles* by the accompanying conventions of hagiography that the author employs.

According to Johnson, the paratactic structure of the *Life & Miracles* that places miracles side by side, unsubordinated to one another, propelling the reader along from one to the next, and its language of wonder⁶⁰⁹ (evidenced by the repeated use of the word *thauma* and its derivatives) indicates the genre of Hellenistic paradoxography “which aligned itself with the “natural wonders” side of classical historiography.”

Ps.-Basil, explicitly in the prologue to the *Life* and implicitly by way of quotation in the prologue to the *Miracles*, invokes Herodotus, “the father of classical historiography”⁶¹⁰ whose primary organizing principle in the *Histories*, according to Johnson, who cites Immerwarhr, has long been recognized to be “the framing of individual units of narrative with anticipating and summary statements... that has the potential to produce a complex overall narrative.”⁶¹¹ Johnson notes the “autobiographical, autopic ethnography” of Book 2 of the *Histories* in which Herodotus, according to Johnson, citing Marincola, “occupies simultaneously the position of narrator and character. We see him everywhere in [Bk 2] as the initiator, guide and discoverer of information.”⁶¹² The same could be said of Ps.-Basil in regard to his presence in the *Life & Miracles*, especially in *Mir.* 31 where he puts himself at the very center of the history of the collection process for the miracles, inserting, in a sense, his own history in regard to the text, into the history of the text. Johnson declares this autobiographical mode of historiography to be “undeniably Herodotean.”⁶¹³

Ps.-Basil has two interlocutors for his collection. For his Christian audience, he invokes Luke while for his classically savvy though not-yet-believing audience, he

invokes Herodotus. The *Miracles* can legitimately be situated, as Ps.-Basil saw them to be, in an overarching genre of historiography of which hagiography is a scion. Taking into account the observations of previous scholars who place the *Life & Miracles* in the genre of hagiography yet, at the same time, remark on its uniqueness within that genre, I advance the suggestion that to accommodate and to appeal to his two audiences, Ps.-Basil simultaneously accessed and employed the genres of hagiography and paradoxography (or another related genre that evokes wonder). For my purposes, I am going to accept Johnson's designation of the mystery genre as paradoxography.⁶¹⁴ Ps.-Basil's text was a composite of the two, displaying characteristics of both. When Ps.-Basil wrote the *Life & Miracles*, hagiography was in its infant stages while, on the other hand, paradoxography was nearing the end of its literary tradition.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in this section I have noted that while there is general consensus in the scholarship that the *Life & Miracles* is a hagiography and its author a hagiographer, scholars also universally note that the text significantly differs from other works of the same genre. Johnson has taken the discussion a step farther by suggesting that the genre of the *Life & Miracles* is perhaps that of paradoxography.

My examination of the text and the changing intent of the author, as shaped by fluctuations in his career and reflected by the nature of the redactions, suggests that to appeal to his double audience, Ps.-Basil employed two different genres, hagiography and paradoxography (or something akin to it).

The presence of two genres within the text may speak to what Johnson identifies as a disconnect between the *Miracles* of Thekla and later Byzantine miracle

collections,⁶¹⁵ some of which date from as early as the sixth century. Many of these collections are focused primarily on healing (eg. the *Miracles* of Artemios and of Cosmas and Damian) and are independent of classical models.⁶¹⁶ Paradoxographical accounts and the *Miracles* (except in the case of autopsy) are generally expressed in the third person, a fact that sets them apart from the Asclepian *iamata* which often are framed as first person narratives.⁶¹⁷

The paratactic structure of paradoxography worked well for the author in that its open-endedness allowed for another and another and yet another amazing thing about Thekla to be added to his collection. The genre was familiar to the segment of his readership for whom hagiography was not. The spiritual dimension of the *Life & Miracles* was foreign to paradoxography but was accommodated by the emerging genre of hagiography. The conventions of the two genres in the *Miracles* at times complemented and at other times transgressed each other. At times they were genres in conflict. This tension between the two genres may also speak to the resulting reception of the text.

Notes to Chapter 8

- ⁵²⁶ Krueger (2004), 5, also for hagiography as a nineteenth-century appellation.
- ⁵²⁷ Woodward (1990), 339.
- ⁵²⁸ Dawes and Baynes (1977), ix. They describe the ascetic spiritual world as including the universal presence of demons (xi). Demons, not the Devil, occupy a significant role in miracle collections including the *Life & Miracles*.
- ⁵²⁹ Krueger (2004), 196.
- ⁵³⁰ Krueger (2004), 192 and 195-196.
- ⁵³¹ Johnson (2006), 8-9, n. 26. See also Johnson's opening remarks in his "Appendix 3, Early Byzantine Miracle Collections," 239.
- ⁵³² Johnson (2006), 8.
- ⁵³³ Krueger (2004), 15.
- ⁵³⁴ See Heffernan (1988).
- ⁵³⁵ Brodies (2001), 105.
- ⁵³⁶ Clark (1984), 170, identifies two types of classical biography: 1) one characterized by chronological order as represented by Plutarch and 2) another that proceeded from Alexandrian literati that treated subjects topically as represented by Suetonius. We see this same distinction within the genre of hagiography. Some are organized chronologically and others thematically. In the *Life & Miracles*, the *Life* is structured chronologically while the *Miracles* are not. In part, the *Miracles* follow a thematic organizing principle as will be discussed in our chapter on structure.
- ⁵³⁷ Heffernan (1988), 19.
- ⁵³⁸ Ward (1992), xi-xiv.
- ⁵³⁹ Krueger (2004), 5.
- ⁵⁴⁰ Krueger (2004), 5 for Dionysius, and 6 for Gregory of Nyssa.
- ⁵⁴¹ Krueger (2004), 6.
- ⁵⁴² Theodoret of Cyrrhus, prologue 2. Price's translation (1985), 4.
- ⁵⁴³ Krueger (2004), 10.
- ⁵⁴⁴ Krueger (2004), 18.
- ⁵⁴⁵ For further examples, see Krueger (2004), 208-9, n. 29.
- ⁵⁴⁶ Ephrem, *Hymn of the Nativity* 14.16-7 provided by Krueger (2004), 19.
- ⁵⁴⁷ See Krueger (2004), 29.
- ⁵⁴⁸ Theodoret of Cyrrhus, prologue 11. Price's translation (1985), 8-9. Krueger (2004), 29, supplies *ἐξηλωκόσιν*.
- ⁵⁴⁹ *Life* prologue 43-7.
- ⁵⁵⁰ John IV, *vita* 35-6 in Krueger (2004), 33. Krueger (2004), chapter 3, provides fascinating visual representation of the Evangelists as authors.
- ⁵⁵¹ Krueger (2004), 62.
- ⁵⁵² Krueger (2004), 62.
- ⁵⁵³ Krueger (2004), 70.
- ⁵⁵⁴ Morphou/ Omorfo is thought to have been derived from the Greek word *omorphos* (shapely) and as referring to the beauty of Aphrodite who was widely worshipped on the island of Cyprus. See *Miracle* 3 for Thekla's battle with Aphrodite.
- ⁵⁵⁵ Jones and Jones (2010), 169.
- ⁵⁵⁶ Krueger (2004), 3, 9, 80, 90.
- ⁵⁵⁷ Schulenburg (1990), 307. See also Schulenburg (1998), 17-58.

- ⁵⁵⁸ Krueger (2004), 79.
- ⁵⁵⁹ Krueger (2004), 79.
- ⁵⁶⁰ *Mir.* 12.1-4.
- ⁵⁶¹ Krueger (2004), 79.
- ⁵⁶² *Mir.* epilogue 1-4.
- ⁵⁶³ *Mir.* 41.27-32.
- ⁵⁶⁴ Ezek. 2:9-3:3.
- ⁵⁶⁵ Krueger (2004), 80.
- ⁵⁶⁶ Krueger (2004), 85-6.
- ⁵⁶⁷ *Mir.* 12.9-17.
- ⁵⁶⁸ *Mir.* 12.18-25.
- ⁵⁶⁹ Krueger (2004), 87.
- ⁵⁷⁰ Krueger (2004), 87.
- ⁵⁷¹ Artem. *Interpretation of Dreams*, 2.20, trans. White, as cited by Krueger (2004), 87.
- ⁵⁷² The passing of the mantle of authority is a biblical idea. See the story of Elijah and Elisha in 2 Kgs. 2. We will discuss the mantle of Thekla in another section.
- ⁵⁷³ The poem by Basil is cited by Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 168, ed. R. Henry, *Photius: Bibliothèque* vol. 2, 161. Photius, as cited in the *TLG, Bibliotheca Codex* 168, Bekker, 116b, line 2, writes,
- Ἔστι δὲ Βασιλείου οὗτος ὁ καὶ μέτροις ἐντείνας
Τὰ τῆς πρωτομάρτυρος Θέκλης ἔργα καὶ ἄλλα καὶ
νικητήρια· καὶ ἄλλα δὲ αὐτοῦ γράμματα.*
- ⁵⁷⁴ On the competition between the texts, see Gotter (2003), 202.
- ⁵⁷⁵ See Krueger (2004), 82.
- ⁵⁷⁶ Perkins (1995), 213.
- ⁵⁷⁷ *Miracles* 7-12, 29-32, 41, and 46.
- ⁵⁷⁸ Krueger (2004), 82 and 230, n. 171 citing Kaster (1988).
- ⁵⁷⁹ Krueger (2004), 82.
- ⁵⁸⁰ Krueger (2004), 82.
- ⁵⁸¹ Krueger, (2004) chapter 5, addresses these specific points. I follow him and have adopted his terminology here.
- ⁵⁸² Cooper (1995), 1.
- ⁵⁸³ Clark (1984), 170.
- ⁵⁸⁴ Davies (1980), 13.
- ⁵⁸⁵ Holzberg (1995), 26.
- ⁵⁸⁶ Woodward (1990), 337.
- ⁵⁸⁷ Perkins, (2001), 126.
- ⁵⁸⁸ Consider the anonymous letter to Diognetus (c. late second/early third century), 5.4-5, that describes Christians as demonstrating “the remarkable and admittedly unusual character of their own citizenship. They live in their own countries, but only as aliens; they participate in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland is foreign.” See “The Letter to Diognetus.” In Ehrman (1999), 71-75.
- ⁵⁸⁹ Holzberg (1995), 26.
- ⁵⁹⁰ Braund (1993), 208.
- ⁵⁹¹ Perkins (1995), 202.
- ⁵⁹² Dagron (1978), 25 and 27.
- ⁵⁹³ Gotter (2003), 207.
- ⁵⁹⁴ Dagron (1978), 25.

⁵⁹⁵ López-Salvá (1972-2), 223.

⁵⁹⁶ Johnson (2006), 174.

⁵⁹⁷ See Dagron's comment (1978), 407, n. 8 on Ps.-Basil's comment that had he desired to and if he had the time to he could also, like Hesiod, have written "a catalogue of the most excellent women of [his] day." In this, Ps.-Basil is referring to a lost work of Hesiod entitled *Μεγάλαι Ἴστοιαι (Γυναικων Κἀταλογος)*. Dagron refers the reader to *RE* 8.1 col. 1201-40 (Rzach).

⁵⁹⁸ Gotter (2003), 204.

⁵⁹⁹ Gotter (2003), 202.

⁶⁰⁰ *Mir.* prologue 15-21.

⁶⁰¹ For references to classical authors in the *L&M*, see Dagron (1978), 157 and López-Salvá (1972-3), 246-55.

⁶⁰² See also Chapter 8 on Genre, in which I discuss the audience of the *Miracles*, and Chapter 9 on Structure.

⁶⁰³ Dagron (1978), 6.

⁶⁰⁴ Dagron (1978) 5.

⁶⁰⁵ López-Salvá (1972-3), 226, classifies the work as hagiography liberal and tolerant (228) with characteristics that connect it with antique collections of pagan temples and with Hellenistic novels and within the same literary genre as aretalogy, the narration of the portentous. Johnson (2006, 20-1) rescues the *Life* from the genre of Hellenistic romance and places it squarely in the tradition of historiography. As already noted, in part, above, Perkins (1995), 213, argues that hagiography eclipsed and replaced the Greek romance in that they were constructed on different world views—one that rejected suffering and, the other, which embraced it and, in so doing, "introduced new categories of subjects"—that of the weak and downtrodden—providing a new type of hero and heroine, ones that understood that the victory came not from themselves but from God.

⁶⁰⁶ Johnson (2006), 114, 120, 196. For a detailed discussion of the place of paradoxography in classical and late antiquity see Johnson (2006), 113-20 and 195-7.

⁶⁰⁷ For a comprehensive examination of the occurrence of *thauma* in the *Life & Miracles*, see Chapter 12: *Miracles*.

⁶⁰⁸ Schulenburg (1990), 306, notes a "problematic distinction" in some *vitae* in regard to the response the authors were attempting to elicit from their readers. Did a particular author hope to move his readers to an imitation of the socially acceptable and religiously sanctioned behaviour of the saint or was it his aim, instead, to evoke wonder for "the saint's abnormally excessive deeds or virtues—her inimitable extremes?" Perhaps it would have been impossible for Ps.-Basil to have written the *Miracles* as *imitanda*, for everything about Thekla was extreme. She, at times, was a most unsaintly saint!

⁶⁰⁹ Johnson (2006), 200 recognizes that "the spectrum of miracle-telling in the ancient world was a broad one." He (p. 196) highlights the significance of Ps.-Basil's choice of the word *thauma* to describe the miracles rather than *iamata* which would have aligned it with Asclepian literature, or *terata* that is used in the NT. Also, the *Life & Miracles*, except for the cases of autopsy, are told in a third person narrative while the Asclepian *iamata* are normally narrated in the first person.

⁶¹⁰ Johnson (2006), 114.

⁶¹¹ Johnson (2006), 115.

⁶¹² Johnson (2006), 118 from Marincola (1987), 127.

⁶¹³ Johnson (2006), 119.

⁶¹⁴ López-Salvá (1972-3), 226-7, classifies the *Life & Miracles* as a hagiography and as sharing the purpose and characteristics of aretalogy.

⁶¹⁵ Johnson (2006), 8, n. 26f. See Johnson's (2006) appendix on the Byzantine Miracle Collections.

⁶¹⁶ According to Heffernen (1988), 31-2, such collections rely on the narrative aretalogy of the Gospels that emphasized the miraculous, a particular aspect of Hellenized Semitic biography.

⁶¹⁷ See Johnson (2006), 205.

CHAPTER 9: STRUCTURE

The author addresses the topic of structure in the opening lines of his prologue to the *Miracles*:

Since we have already presented many very fine stories about Thekla in the preceding account of her, it is necessary, then, to follow up what has already been related and to shed light on the truth. For this reason, without need for much reflection or effort, we have compiled her miracles in no particular order and have published them as well in a brief composition.⁶¹⁸

If we take the author at face value, he had no particular structural order in mind when composing the *Miracles*. That should be the end to the inquiry. Case, open and shut. But the prologue reflects an authorial conceit belied by the rest of the text. The collection is a substantial forty-six-miracle corpus and not, as Ps.-Basil describes it, “a brief composition.” And contrary to the author’s assertion that little effort was involved in the gathering and compilation of the collection, in a number of the miracles he refers to the great effort involved in the task:

Like men digging for gold, I first cleared away a lot of brushwood and earth, and in this way I collected systematically the miracles that had been buried by time and that had become vague through forgetfulness and somehow confused, and so were in the process of fading from memory in respect to their order, location and how they came about. Nevertheless, I must recount the miracle that I discovered after having searched for it and having tracked it down with great difficulty and effort; this miracle, performed for herself [Thekla] and her sanctuary, inspired in me the utmost admiration and fervor, and I found it with difficulty.⁶¹⁹

According to Marincola, historians, that group of authors with which Ps.-Basil aligns himself, fashioned appropriate *personae* for themselves within the narrative.⁶²⁰ Among the most common claims of historians in attempting to establish their authority was that of effort or labour.⁶²¹ The *topos* of effort, common to epideictic rhetoric, reaches back to Thucydides and Isocrates.⁶²² The *topos* was assimilated into the tradition of hagiography as well, as is evident in the conclusion to the *vita* of St. Theodore of Sykeon:

Of their many tales I have selected a few—some I forgot and others I shrank from recounting through my faint-heartedness. But if anyone wished to relate them all, I fancy the writer would not be strong enough for the task...⁶²³

Following the *topos*, it required a lot of effort to be a good historian or a good hagiographer. It was not a task for the “faint-hearted.” St. Theodoret of Cyrillus concludes his *History of the Monks of Syria* with a comment on the labour involved in such an endeavour:

It is for this reason that we have undertaken the labor of composition, offering to those who wish it a means of benefit. I ask my future readers, as they luxuriate effortlessly in the labours of others, to repay my labours with prayer.⁶²⁴

Contrary to the assertion by Ps.-Basil in the prologue to the *Miracles*, they were a product of a great deal of reflection and effort, especially in regard to principles of organization and structure, as will be addressed in this chapter.

Scholarship on the Structure of the *Miracles*

Though many scholars have tried, it is a challenge to determine the organizing principle that Ps.-Basil may have employed in the overall structure of the *Miracles* which in itself may be indicative of the extensive effort invested in its composition. Radermacher proposed a symmetrical ring structure for the *Miracles* with a nucleus of punishment miracles flanked on either side by eleven miracles extending outward from that nucleus composed first of seven pleasant miracles and then four miracles about women;⁶²⁵ his thesis, however, is dependent on how one counts the miracles (as there are, in some cases, miracles within miracles) and whether one accepts the attribution of the penultimate miracle about Xenarchis to the author.⁶²⁶ The question has been raised as to whether the collection in its present form was intended by the author as the final redaction or whether it was still a work in progress which, of course, would impair a definitive structural analysis.⁶²⁷ The general scholarly consensus is that, although the overall structure is elusive, it is clear from the internal evidence of the text and especially from the transitions between miracles that to the author's mind there was a plan. López-Salvá supports this conclusion:

A partir de esta estructura que ofrece el conjunto de la colección creemos que Basilio escribió obedeciendo a un plan, si bien éste no tenía sus límites claramente trazados y dejaba un amplio margen a la asociación de ideas y la improvisación. El verdadero arte de Basilio está, como afirma Festugière, no tanto en la estructuración rígida que encontraba Radermacher como en la suave transición entre los milagros y el cuidado en los contrastes.⁶²⁸

Dagron arrives at a similar conclusion:

Il y a dans cet agencement un peu de hazard, mais plus de métier qu'il n'y paraît: un certain art des transitions, et un

parti pris de rompre un plan préétabli en jumelant ou alternant les principes d'un classement tantôt par bénéficiaires, tantôt par nature et par tonalité affective des miracles.⁶²⁹

I note an organizing principle in the *Miracles* similar to that which Dagron has suggested, but one more complex and composed of several registers, each explicitly remarked upon by the author, and of varying degrees of import: an emotive register (corresponding to Dagron's affective tone of the individual miracles); a social register (corresponding to what Dagron regards as the beneficiaries); a wonder register that assesses the scope of the impact of the individual miracle;⁶³⁰ a thematic one (corresponding to Dagron's classification by the nature of the miracle); and finally a geographic register.

Ps.-Basil is not alone in working with so complex a structure. Theodoret of Cyrhus, a contemporary of Ps.-Basil, employed, at the very least, a tripartite structure for his *History of the Monks of Syria*, governed by a chronological and a geographical register and also by the consideration as to whether the monks about whom he wrote were still living or not.⁶³¹

Before examining the various registers that shape the structure of the *Miracles*, it is important to note that the author wrote the prologue and introduction *after* he had completed the collection. In the prologue and introduction, Ps.-Basil writes about what he *has* done in regard to the collection and not what he *intends* to do. From this perspective, the list proves to be more than mere literary convention and should be considered as structurally significant.

Among these holy saints is the very great martyr Thekla, who is ever present, ever going to and fro, always listening

to those who pray and ungrudgingly watching over everyone—the healthy, the sick; the cheerful, the disheartened; seafarers, wayfarers; those who are in danger and those who are not; individuals, groups, families, tribes, cities, peoples; strangers and citizens alike; residents and foreigners, men and women; masters and servants; elderly and young; rich and poor; those in government; those in the military; those in court cases; those at war and those at peace.⁶³²

Simplistic as it may seem, the foregoing is a catalogue of the beneficiaries of the individual miracles in the collection. Each of the categories is identifiable in the text. Some miracles fall into more than one category because some categories are much broader than others: men and women, for example in comparison to those involved in court cases or serving in the military. Note that not all categories are necessarily paired or in apposition (e.g. “those in government; those in the military; those in court cases”).

I would conjecture that Ps.-Basil, having compiled the miracles, prepared a brief overview for his readers perhaps thinking to himself as he did so: “Here is the one about Menodoros and his court case; and the one about elderly Alypios; and the miracle about Hypsistios, harsh master that he was; and the one about Bassiane who lives among us as a token of peace; and this one about the wedding thief when the wedding guests were so disheartened; and then here are miracles about young people—the little boy and his damaged eye, the orphans of Aurelios cheated out of their inheritance; and the one done on behalf of cities and peoples when the Laestrygonian-like bandits plundered the region; and I mustn’t forget the military—General Saturnilos and the soldier Ambrosios” and so forth.⁶³³ The fact that the prologue was written after the miracles, and that the catalogue corresponds to the protagonists of the individual miracles, does not negate any prior authorial intent. From the broad spectrum of categories in the prologue’s overview, it

would seem that one of Ps.-Basil's goals was to present Thekla as a saint for all people and, indeed, that is what he indicates in the opening lines of the passage cited above:

Among these holy saints is the very great martyr Thekla, who is ever present, ever going to and fro, always listening to those who pray and ungrudgingly watching over everyone.⁶³⁴

Having addressed this most basic of the organizing principles at work in the *Miracles*, let us now move on to the individual registers, noting their occurrence in the text and what the author has to say about them.

At the end of his introduction, Ps.-Basil writes that he shall “begin with those miracles she [Thekla] performed especially for herself and against the *daemones*.” He ends *Mir.* 4 with this invitation to his readers: “Come, then, let us call to mind the miracles successively from the beginning [performed] either for a group or for individuals.” Next follow two miracles, each performed on behalf of groups, in fact for entire cities, namely Seleucia and Iconium. He closes this section by summarizing what type of miracles he has already presented for their examination and then orients them as to what to expect next:

But we are calling to mind these earlier miracles as being more renowned and concerning an entire city; but let us not omit those [miracles] that concern just one man or woman... And henceforth, [miracles] that are especially worthy of honour and connected to people who are particularly worthy of honour are to be given precedence—and most worthy of honour of all mentioned [are] priests and bishops.⁶³⁵

Having visited the earliest miracles, the ones against the *daemones*, and those done on behalf of entire cities, the focus next turns to miracles for individuals with precedence being given to those individuals most honoured, namely priests and bishops. In *Mir.* 11,

the author allows himself a small digression from what he describes as the “established order” (*τάξις συντάττεσθαι*) of the miracles thus far.

Ps.-Basil and Social Status

Scholars have noted the seeming “obsession” of Ps.-Basil with social rank.⁶³⁶ And, as we have just seen, Ps.-Basil does present social rank as a structural register, and quite unabashedly, too. *Miracles* 6 through 12, “those most worthy of honour” in the collection, have to do with bishops and priests. The last one, *Mir.* 12, was performed on behalf of the author, who at the point that the miracle was written, had already (and at long last!) been accepted into the college of priests of the church. The first two of these miracles apply to Dexianos, who after having served as a member of the college of priests, as an acolyte of the martyr, and a guardian of her treasures, advanced to the episcopate of Seleucia. Next, in *Mir.* 9, Menodoros, a bishop of Aigai who had previously been enrolled in the registry of the church at Seleucia, receives help from Thekla. *Mir.* 10 concerns Symposios, another one-time bishop of Seleucia, but an Arian at the time of the miracle. Although somewhat concerned that he might be interrupting his established order, in *Mir.* 11, Ps.-Basil writes about young Aurelios, a relative of Bishop Symposios. Ps.-Basil rationalizes this “disruption” of the order of putting “priests with priests” by classifying this one as putting “spiritual children with spiritual fathers.” Aurelios suffers from scrofula but Thekla delivers him from the disease. The last of the miracles “most worthy of honour” also involves healing and is about the author himself, although he blushes to relate it. It is the anthrax, excommunication, and reinstatement narrative. This is the miracle that Dagron sees as having been added to the collection in the redaction of the text during the episcopate of Bishop Basil.⁶³⁷ All these miracles,

according to Ps.-Basil, are most worthy of honour in that they have to do with men who are most worthy of honour, the priests and bishops. Even within this group of “most honourable miracles,” there is a definite social ranking: first, the hometown bishop who had risen through the ranks; then one of their own who later served as bishop in another city; next, an Arian bishop but one who had turned from that persuasion to embrace orthodoxy; then a godly relative of his; and finally, the miracle about the author himself, who seems not to have risen above the college of priests. His miracle, however, is still about bishops, this time, bad Bishop Basil.

Having reached the end of that section, the author follows “the established order” thus far presenting miracles performed for individuals and based on social rank. Ps.-Basil presents the reader with four miracles about men in descending order of rank: the General Saturnilos who descended from generations of illustrious men; Hypsistios, the “well-born and eminent” man from the neighbouring city of Claudiopolis; next, a Christian noble man from Cyprus; then the admirable soldier Ambrosios; and, finally, Leontios the skilled craftsman. In both the preceding group and this one, amongst those individuals equal in social rank, miracles concerning those who live outside of Seleucia are presented after their social equals who are residents of the city.

Miracles Performed for Women

Miracles 18-22 carry on with the established order of miracles done on behalf of individuals—this time for women: Aba of Seleucia “of an illustrious and famous family” and Tigriana of Tarsus “also of an illustrious family;” Bassiane, “from among the noble women of the Ketis;” the unnamed wife of General Vitianos; Paula the wife of Chrysermos, “an official among the ranks of the rhetors in the administration.” With this

last miracle concerning women, the author sets the stage for a change of register, a thematic one. For Paula, whose daughter's wedding celebration had been tarnished by the theft of the wedding garment, Thekla "who observes everything and watches over everything" revealed the place, the spot, and the thief and thereby restored the merriment suitable to such an occasion.

Change of Theme: Social Rank to Eyes

The topic of theft and the reference to Thekla's watchful gaze provide the transition to *Mir.* 22 (still about women, and this time about Thekla) in which Thekla, by means of her "all-seeing and divine eye," reveals the thief and the location of a cross stolen from her sanctuary. At this juncture, Ps.-Basil sets aside social register as an organizing principle and moves to a thematic one. The topic of eyes is the bridge to *Miracles* 23-25, a group of ophthalmic healing miracles. In *Mir.* 23, Thekla restores the sight of Pausikakos, a ferryman, "counted among the poor and manual labourers." *Miracle* 24 records the miracle performed on behalf of a little child just recently weaned whose eye was damaged from excessive crying.⁶³⁸ In the final miracle of this group, the author confirms his use of a thematic register when he writes, "Since we have called to mind <miracles> specifically about eyes, we must not neglect another one that happened, close to our time." He proceeds to provide details about "the pandemic affecting the eyes" that fell upon Seleucia one summer.

The theme of eyes carries on into *Mir.* 26 but this time in a different sense—not so much with eyes, per se, but with sight. The miracle occurs at the end of the festival of the saint at her *temenos* at Dalisandos:

If one keeps watch during the sacred night vigil of her feast day, standing on the summit rising up next to <the city>, having his back towards the dawn <the East> and his sight fixed on the sunset <the West> and while in that spot remains also awake, he sees the virgin coming high in the air in a fiery chariot.⁶³⁹

Note the many references to seeing and sight in this passage. At the very end of the miracle, while still retaining the topic of eyes—this time the eyes of the enemies—there is an abrupt doubling of themes that feels a bit contrived but serves to link it with the next miracle:

The martyr has rescued Dalisandos itself on many occasions from siege, by appearing above the mountain ridge and flashing like heavenly fire into the eyes of the enemy and throwing them into a panic and breaking up the siege.⁶⁴⁰

The author, without missing a thematic beat, begins *Mir. 27* with this comment:

And since there has been a mention of siege, let us not overlook the miracle concerning Selinous...<a city that at the time it was> captured and thereafter, was fearful that <being exposed> to the eyes of the wicked brigands, it would be taken again and often.⁶⁴¹

Ps.-Basil finishes *Mir. 27* by directing the thoughts of the readers to the punishment Thekla exacts from “wicked brigands” and with an invocation for her to continue to provide protection for her people and punishment for their enemies:

And so the martyr demonstrates her great strength to very formidable and destructive men, and wages war not by means of an aegis or fringed shield or weapons that scare only in myths...She, like a Fury, diverts entire armies. And may you, O wonderfully-victorious and Christ-bearing Virgin, always divert <them> from the Selinoutes and from us!⁶⁴²

The author continues in a thematic register—from eyes, to sight, to the eyes of the enemies, to siege, and finally to punishment which becomes the theme of the next and largest group of miracles: *Miracles* 27 through 35. At this point, I wish to add an aside but, perhaps, a significant one. López-Salvá notes that those miracles that express the most concern for propriety are those that fall within the punishment miracles and are precisely the ones that have less a touch of reality.⁶⁴³ The punishment miracles do have a touch of the fantastic to them.

Punishing the Wicked

Ps.-Basil creates a link between *Mir.* 27 and 28 by writing that “the <saint> performed <another> similar miracle...” and goes on to describe the Laestrygonian-like thieves who were plundering Seleucia, its environs, and even Thekla’s sanctuary.⁶⁴⁴ He expresses the distress of the victims and raises a heart-rending cry to Thekla for deliverance. The last half of the lengthy miracle is an exposition on divine punishment meted out to the impious, to those who commit sacrilege, in which he invokes the biblical example of Sodom and Gomorrah. Finally, he prepares his audience for the punishment miracles yet to come:

But we must pass on to other evidence that will make us see [Thekla] particularly in anger, responding to faults and offenses by matching to them the punishment measured out and so either bringing <people> to reason and the straight road, <or> going so far as to rob them of life and finally even avenging herself on those whose wickedness has become entirely impossible to correct and to restrain.⁶⁴⁵

Miracle 28 ends with an introductory statement about the next miracle the testimony of which will “reinforce [his] discourse” on punishment and will raise up witnesses not only from Seleucia but from their neighbours to the East. The reference to

the East provides a thematic springboard to the next miracle about Marianos, the insolent and reckless bishop of Tarsus, a city that is the “first <city> from the East to appear to those who are traveling towards the East from any place on the earth.” Marianos forbade his congregation to attend the annual feast of St. Thekla. Thekla did not bear the insult lightly and was seen in a vision:

with rather a fierceness of appearance, and expression, and gait, pacing about the entire city, clapping her hands quite often, and crying out against Marianos and his insolence, and threatening to exact a penalty soon.⁶⁴⁶

Marianos’ “folly” incited the anger of Thekla and cost him his life. Great trembling fell on all. The author, continuing with the thematic register, alerts his readers that the next miracle (*Mir.* 30) “was also accomplished as a result of anger, but without the punishment going as far as death.”

Miracles 30 and 32 are parallel punishment narratives in which personnel of Thekla’s own *temenos*, Maximos and Dexianos, respectively, arouse her displeasure. The two miracles frame *Mir.* 31 and serve to put into perspective for the reader the author’s own confrontation with Thekla described therein. This miracle is a redactionary addition triggered by his neglect of his writing assignment (as the author makes clear in the opening lines of *Mir.* 32). Its narrative lies at the very center, at the epicentre so to speak, of the nine-miracle punishment cycle.

If we were to embrace Radermacher’s suggested structure for the *Miracles* that identifies the punishment miracles as the nucleus for the whole work and as the focus of intensity, then we would expect *Mir.* 31, at the very center of that nucleus, to demonstrate the full wrath of the Martyr. Instead, Ps.-Basil receives no censure, no disapprobation

from Thekla for his misstep but rather her full encouragement and support. (But perhaps Ps.-Basil is not completely transparent with his audience and is not writing in the spirit of full disclosure). Motivated by Thekla's visitation, as he tells us, he took up his task anew where he had left off with the story of Dexianos (*Mir.* 32).

The stories of Maximos and of Dexianos as recipients of "rather mild" punishment (as subtly contrasted with our admirable author's non-punishment) provide a point of comparison for the three remaining punishment miracles which the author describes, at the end of *Mir.* 32, as having "elicited retribution more grievous and severe." With these words, while not abandoning the thematic register, the author introduces a new organizational register—an emotive one to which will shortly be added a geographic register as well.

The reader, warned of the grievous and severe punishment narratives to follow, moves on to *Mir.* 33—a miracle that illuminates the activities of the feast of St. Thekla but especially focuses on the impious behaviour of Orention, one of two men from nearby Erinopolis. On the last day of the festival, during the religious service, Orention's thoughts were arrested not by spiritual things but rather by a girl "so exceedingly beautiful, so gorgeous, even distinguished and full of charm" that he could not take his eyes off of her. That night, he could not sleep. In a vision, the girl is bestowed upon him as a gift in place of the usual gifts Thekla grants to her festival attendees. Shortly after relating his vision to his companions, he met with dire consequences:

When but an hour had passed, a raging and savage *daemon* leapt upon him and tore and ripped him to pieces; and in accordance with the custom of the Persians, it flayed him of his skin and left him skinned and immediately he was filled with worms and pus. As a result all those immediately

present became completely breathless and speechless from the horrible incident that had occurred so suddenly, <that> they almost died on the spot.⁶⁴⁷

The author, as well, was deeply affected by the account:

As for myself, this <account> completely unnerved me and moved me to great fear, so that with trembling hand I scarcely record this dreadful miracle.⁶⁴⁸

From this “dreadful miracle” the author moves on to “an even more dreadful” one in *Mir.* 34. This miracle, like the preceding one, concerns two men from Erinopolis. At this point, the author is grouping miracles according to three registers: 1) an emotive one—dreadful miracles; 2) a thematic register—miracles that have to do with punishment; and 3) a geographic one—people from the city of Erinopolis. The two men in this miracle attempt to seduce one of Thekla’s own dedicated virgins from her *temenos*. Ps.-Basil writes that “because of their sin (*ἀμαρτία*) they perished and shared the same grave.” Having related this “even more dreadful miracle,” the author concludes the narrative by pointing his readers to the next miracle, one that involves “a third pair from Erinopolis”—and thereby explicitly acknowledges a geographic register in the organization of the miracles.

Miracle 35 is the last of the “dreadful” punishment miracles. It relates the story of two business partners: Aurelios and Pappos. Aurelios died, leaving his children as orphans. And Pappos arranged the business affairs in such a way that damaged the estate of the orphans who lost what little money they had. Thekla appears to Pappos and informs him that because of his greed, the deceased Aurelios had approached Christ the King and that “the death-bringing vote” had been cast against Pappos:

[Pappos] was so rattled by fear that his entire body shook, and all its members were filled with shaking, turmoil, and trembling. Even his head was shaking, and his eyes that were already growing dim were rolling around, his tongue was hanging out, his teeth were chattering, and his heart was pounding—so wildly in fact that it seemed to be rushing out in front of the rest of his body—and his feet, as though they had to walk on some sort of loose and shifting ground, were constantly buckling.⁶⁴⁹

Although Pappos hurried to set matters right, it was too late and he died. With the end of this account, the author sets both the geographic and thematic registers aside and directs the reader again to the emotive register:

So, come, now, and move on!—for I must say the same thing again—from the more sombre miracles to the brighter ones, from the more severe to the more kindly, so that [having been] humbled by fear, we may lift up our spirits and be warmed again by some sweeter and gentler accounts.⁶⁵⁰

The rest of the miracles in the collection fall into this category. The emotive register is operative throughout the remainder of the miracles regardless of what other registers may be effected.

Happy Ending Miracles

One wonders whether the next two miracles (36 and 37) were initially intended as one. The narrative portion of *Mir.* 37 is just one sentence in length! In the span of the two miracles, the livestock of Seleucia and its vicinity, a nobleman's horse, and a member of an illustrious Cypriot family all benefit from a health-giving fountain at Thekla's *temenos*.

These two miracles have little drama and result in happy endings much like a few others which Johnson sees as pleasant “interstices” amongst the more intense healing and

punishment miracles.⁶⁵¹ He critiques these “humanitarian miracles” as “evocative and deliberate digressions” for the sake of the reader, ones that contain less action but have “an intensified emotional component” generated by a more “elaborate and exciting narration.” Johnson notes a structural intent here in that these types of miracles tend to occur after quite lengthy ones. I, too, have noted a similar *tendency* in the work but not a definite pattern. Following his idea that some miracles are intended as pauses for the reader, I would add *Mir.* 21 to the group for it is one of the more beautiful narratives in the collection. Also, I would delete *Mir.* 15 which he suggests because, contrary to the paradigm that he sets forth, it is lengthy and despite his efforts to explain it away, it has a hefty dose of adventure:

And suddenly from somewhere a great, fierce gale bringing darkness struck and stirred up the whole surf from the deep, piling wave upon wave, and as the first waves crashed upon the beach and rocks, others were still breaking while others forming from somewhere within the middle of the sea surged forth, just like gigantic mountains towering over very high mountains. And after seizing the ship now totally helpless and cutting its cable <the gale> cast it forth into the middle of the sea along with two young lads just wailing and lifting their hands to heaven and anticipating the death that was swimming towards them...⁶⁵²

Let us now return to *Mir.* 37. As I proceed, call to mind that all of the remaining miracles are governed by the emotive register and that they are considered by Ps.-Basil as being the more kindly, gentler, sweeter, and warmer accounts.

The second portion of *Mir.* 37 provides the explanation for and the transition to the next group or “chorus” of miracles (38-41). Not only does Ps.-Basil appeal to the emotions of his readers, he attributes emotions to the miracles themselves:

Well, then, do the stories not denounce us and shout out to the learned among men, if they alone are overlooked by us, although not overlooked in these matters by the Martyr: On the contrary, in fact, often they <the learned among men> have encountered miracles among the wise and learned. Come, then, what we have learned thus far, let us recount in order that our stories may thank us since they also have been deemed worthy of the blessed “dance” (*μακαρίας χοροστασίας*) of the miracles.⁶⁵³

Suddenly the miracles are animated, they shout out to be told, they dance, and they give thanks when they are chosen as part of the chorus of miracles. In the same way rhetors advanced along the *cursus honorum*, and some lay preachers might become enrolled in the register of preachers and teachers, so also some stories (*logoi*) attain to the blessed chorus of miracles. A story is just a story until it becomes part of the miracle chorus. And when the *logoi* are deemed worthy of the chorus, they give thanks to Ps.-Basil who, in effect, functions as their *choregos* (chorus leader), and to the readers, the audience for whom they perform. Grateful stories, thankful *logoi*—what an original image!

Yet, we do find a supporting idea in an unexpected source. A sixth-century folio (c. 512) of one of the earliest and most lavish extant illuminated Byzantine manuscripts includes a portrait of the Princess Anicia Juliana.⁶⁵⁴ In the portrait, the princess, flanked by the personifications of Generosity (*Μεγαλοψυχία*) and Prudence (*Φρόνησις*), is distributing gold coins which Generosity is holding. A titular inscription at the top of the miniature reads “Patron of the Arts.” Kneeling before the princess is a small female figure identified by an inscription as “the Thankfulness of the Arts.”⁶⁵⁵ That the miniature contains inscriptions suggests that the artist was still following classical tradition although many contemporary artists of the day had abandoned the convention. Might “the

gratefulness of the arts” have been a cultural theme in Ps.-Basil’s day or are these two references merely a coincidence? At any rate, in the *Miracles*, Thekla is clearly styled as a patron of the arts as evidenced by these lines from *Mir.* 38:

For this reason the Martyr made haste—for she is a lover of learning (*φιλόλογος*) and the arts (*φιλόμουσος*), and is always pleased with those men who praise her in a polished style...⁶⁵⁶

And again—

“And so <you can see> then that the martyr loves literature and rejoices in literary eulogies.”⁶⁵⁷

The passage quoted above from *Mir.* 37 about the blessed miracle chorus announced a re-engagement of the thematic register—this time, as we have seen, about the arts and learned men which is in effect all the way through *Mir.* 41. Thus begins the “literary section” of the *Miracles* which includes two classical references—one to Homer (*Mir.* 38) and one to Plato (*Mir.* 39). The one biblical reference of this group is found in the very last miracle in which the author’s hopes of advancement, so to speak, are resurrected when, just in the nick of time for him to present his eulogy at her festival, Thekla heals him by rolling away the infection from his ear like the stone that was rolled away from the tomb on Easter morning.

Classical Reference and Learned Men in the *Miracles*

The *Miracles* include several Homeric phrases and, according to López-Salvá, a number of lexical items that have Homeric echoes.⁶⁵⁸ Dagron writes that in the *Miracles*, “Homère est sous-jacent ici comme la Bible.”⁶⁵⁹ Ps.-Basil is a fan of Herodotus and, according to Marincola, Herodotus’ prefaces contain echoes of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.⁶⁶⁰ Dagron sees the *Life & Miracles* as Ps.-Basil’s own *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.⁶⁶¹ Many of the

Homeric references in the *Life & Miracles* are set off by such phrases such as “someone poetically might say” or “someone Homerizing might say.”⁶⁶² Classical quotations and phrases, particularly those from Homer, Plato, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, were internalized by those raised and educated in classical Greek.⁶⁶³ Even as late as the twelfth century, the Cappadocian author of the *Timarion* (55-6), a work that relates the details of the *panegyris* of St. Demetrios, displays no hesitation when inserting the common Homeric phrase (e.g. *Od.* 5.1), “When the early-born, rosy-fingered Dawn appeared” between his description of the night vigils for the saint and the arrival of the bishops at daybreak. In the early days of Christianity, Clement of Alexandria (c. 160 – c. 215) employed classical allusions in his *Pedagogue*. In it (*Ped.* 97), he refers to Penelope at her loom as an example of Christians who by day weave self-restraint into their lives but who undo the work at night by intemperance. In another passage, Clement writes that “we can fly trustfully to ‘the care-banishing breast’ (Hom. *Il.* 22.83) of God the Father” (*Ped.* 1.6.43). Ps.-Basil is unapologetic about presenting Thekla’s most faithful priest, acolyte and guard Dexianos, who went on to become bishop, as a “Diomedes of her own.” (*Mir.* 3). Christian epitaphs in Anatolia abound with Homeric reference. One in particular (*MAMA* i. 370) has been described as virtually a Homeric cento.⁶⁶⁴ It is not unusual that we should encounter classical allusions and, in particular, Homeric ones in the *Miracles*, not only because the author is appealing to men of letters but also because they were part of the shared cultural mindset.

Perhaps the *Life & Miracles*’s longest classical reference is found in *Mir.* 38, the first one after the “blessed miracle chorus” dances into existence the section for “the wise and the learned:”

[Thekla] paid a visit by night to [Alypios] and ...she inquired immediately what it was that he suffered and what he wished. In response, he said, “You know. Why then should I tell this to you who know all things?” This is from Homer, but in adopting it, he spoke most appropriately—more so than even Achilles, when he spoke to his mother Thetis—in order at one and the same time to announce his profession and also to humbly entreat the Virgin by the loveliest and most agreeable <turn of phrase>. At any rate, the Martyr smiled, pleased with the man and with the verse, admiring how he had answered fittingly indeed.⁶⁶⁵

In this miracle, we are introduced to what has been termed by Dagron “une dynastie de professeurs” at Seleucia, Alypios and Olympios, a father/son duo both who were grammarians plus another son Solymios mentioned part way through the miracle:⁶⁶⁶

This Solymios, who was dedicated to both <his> family and learning, passed part of his day in study and part with his father. In the morning he would occupy himself with literature, and then when noon came, he would go to his father, to visit and care for him...⁶⁶⁷

Kaster suggests that the designation of these men as *γραμματιστής* does not denote “elementary teacher(s)” but is more closely aligned to the professional sense of *γραμματικός* (scholar).⁶⁶⁸

Ps.-Basil’s transition to the next two miracles (*Mir.* 39 and *Mir.* 40) is clearly still within the same thematic register:⁶⁶⁹ “after the teachers, let us go to the scholars (*σοφιστάς*),” Isokasios and Aretarchos of whom he writes the following:

Each of whom, being also an unbeliever, chanced upon a miracle from the Martyr but staunchly remained an unbeliever. But responsibility remains with those who do the choosing, as the admirable Plato somewhere says, so the Martyr is guiltless.⁶⁷⁰

Isokasios is listed in the *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* and attested in works other than the *Miracles*. Isokasios was a grammarian prior to becoming a sophist.

Theodoret of Cyrrihus sent students to him. Letters from Theodoret to Isokasios are still extant. After 467, according to John Malalas, Isokasios submitted to baptism.⁶⁷¹ *Miracle* 39, then, has to have been written prior to 467.

Aretarchos the sophist of *Mir.* 40 attributed the miracle he experienced to the *daemon* Sarpedon who, as he reasoned, “directed [him] to seek and receive <the remedy> from [Thekla].” In response to the attribution of the miracles to Sarpedon rather than Thekla, Ps.-Basil interjects this mocking address with classical allusions:

So then, cleverest and most intelligent of the sophists, you
who exude Gorgias himself for us...⁶⁷²

Gorgias, according to Dillon, was a Sicilian sophist who delivered orations at *panegyreis* including a Pythian oration as well as an Olympic one—which encouraged the Greeks to attack the Persians. In Ps.-Basil’ mind, this sophist was not as smart as he thought himself to be.⁶⁷³

The final miracle in this thematically organized group about learned men ends with Thekla’s ministrations on behalf of the author himself while he was still a lay speaker but “not yet one of those who speak in churches” and prior to him being “deemed worthy of the clerical council and the register of preachers and priests.”⁶⁷⁴ The implication is, of course, that because of her patronage and blessing, he was able to advance in his chosen path. In fact, as I discuss elsewhere in this study, he compares his deliverance from his ear infection and its concomitant suffering to Jesus’ resurrection from the tomb!

So ends this carefully constructed section of the *Miracles*. Whether Ps.-Basil has constructed this section upon a social register, is difficult to judge. He began with grammaticians, moved to sophists, and finished with himself prior to his promotion.

The Final Group of Miracles: Thekla's Devotees

Unlike the rest of the corpus, Ps.-Basil provides no transition to the next and final group of miracles. Despite the lack of an explicit transition, it is evident that there has been one because all the remaining miracles have to do with women. With the transition, Ps.-Basil does not abandon, however, his chorus image for the work. As I discuss in more detail in the section on dance (see Chapter 3 for Thekla as Chorus Leader), in *Mir.* 44 of this next section, Ps.-Basil styles Thekla as the chorus leader (*ἡγεμονίδι*) for all the holy people, men and women, in her ascetic chorus (*χοροῦ*) which she leads (*ἐξάρχειν*).

Before proceeding with the examination of the organizational principles in the remaining text, and while this again calls to mind the choral imagery present in the *Miracles*, I should like to connect Ps.-Basil's artistry in this regard to that of two other authors: Pindar and Theodoret of Cyrrhus. In reference to Pindar's *Victory Odes*, Lefkowitz writes, "The subject of the greatest surviving lyric poetry is not love nor death but athletic games." Lefkowitz further discusses the athletic nature of the compositional structure of Pindar's odes: "Pindar abandons the traditional metaphors for song and speaks of his art in terms of the games himself."⁶⁷⁵ Brown writes that "simile is rare in Pindar's poetry although it is rich in metaphor."⁶⁷⁶ The same is true of Ps.-Basil. In the *Victory Odes*, Pindar styles himself as an athlete in regard to his composition of the odes and couches his text with athletic terminology.⁶⁷⁷ For example consider this passage from the *Nemean Odes*:

I swear that I have not stepped over the marker (*terma*) and released my swift utterance like a bronze-cheeked javelin.⁶⁷⁸

In another place (*Ol.* 2.80-90), Pindar adapts the metaphor of winged words to style himself as an archer who chooses his target. Is it possible that Ps.-Basil adapts the metaphor of dancing and grateful miracles because he sees himself as *choregos* of the miracles?

In much the same way Pindar crafts his odes with metaphors appropriate to his subject matter, especially in the transitions, so also Ps.-Basil crafts his miracles with metaphors appropriate to his subject matter—which he identifies as the “ascetic chorus.” And as in Pindar’s odes, it is precisely in the transitions that Ps.-Basil’s miracles are animated and call out for attention as already noted. As Lefkowitz has pointed out for Pindar, transitions allow the author to pass over some material and move to the next subject.⁶⁷⁹ While other studies have noted references to classical authors in the *Life & Miracles*, the parallel between Pindar and Ps.-Basil has never been drawn perhaps because no other study, not even Dagron’s or that of Johnson’s literary study of the *Life & Miracles*, has noted the presence, function, or the extent of metaphors in the *Miracles*.

It is not in Pindar alone that one encounters the use of a theme in the overarching compositional structure of a work particularly appropriate to the work. The same compositional principle can be seen in Theodoret of Cyrrhus’ *History of the Monks of Syria* in which he presents his vivid vignettes as blessings. In the prologue, Theodoret writes that “grace is ever-flowing; it elects the worthy and through them as through springs pours forth the streams of blessing. He writes that he “sanctified his tongue” in the recitation of the stories and from each he seeks a blessing. Theodoret styles himself as

extending blessing through the compilation of the lives, and as a recipient of blessing from the lives themselves. He concludes the account of Zebinas, Polychronius, and Asclepius with “asking in turn for their blessing, I shall proceed to another narrative.” At the end of the chapter (29) about the godly women Marana and Cyra he writes that, since he has “culled the blessing” from their story, he can move on to another account. The closing lines of the *History* include God’s blessing to Abraham, “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”⁶⁸⁰ Pindar as athlete, Ps.-Basil as choregos, and Theodoret as blesser, all reinforce the purpose of their writings even in the compositional structure they have chosen for their individual works.

So, let us move on to the last “chorus” of miracles, the chorus which reaches its crescendo in praise for Thekla the chorus leader of her devotees. This group still falls under the emotive register of milder and gentler accounts. The thematic register has shifted from lettered men primarily to women and to a lesser extent, to devotees of Thekla regardless of gender. In the early group of miracles related to women and in this latter group as well, the only guide for social register is their social standing by birth or by marriage. There are few occupations or positions listed that can help establish social rank among the women. (Ps.-Basil usually indicates whether a woman is a Christian or not but he also does so for the men.) In the last group of miracles, we encounter Kalliste “a well-born and religious woman” who was married, Bassiane, who was “poor and undistinguished”, whose few belongings might compare to those of a “working woman” (*χερσνήτιδι γυναικί*), Dosithea “of a very notable and well-born local family,” Xenarchis, an unlettered woman, who previously had been part of the community at Thekla’s

temenos but later married, and Dionysia, a married woman who became an apotactite, and her daughter of the same name who led a virginal life. It was in a woman's advance in asceticism that she achieved distinction, otherwise, her standing is expressed in relation to her birth or her marriage. In the early group of miracles about women, we find the same holds true.

In the whole of the *Miracles*, there are only four women who have identities beyond that defined by birth, marriage, or asceticism: an unnamed old woman (*γρᾶδος*) who was the grandmother (*τήθης*) of a little boy and functioned as his caregiver (*οἰκεία*); Bassiane (*Mir.* 19), a pregnant hostage who had been exchanged (*ὠμήρευε*) in a peace agreement; an unnamed elderly (*προσβῦτις*) woman (*Mir.* 24) who served as a nurse (*τίτθη*) for a little boy; and an unnamed woman who is described as "one of the ladies of the stage" (*ἐν τι τῶν ἐπι σκηνῆς γυναιῶν*) (*Mir.* 42) and as a "courtesan" (*ἐταίρα*).⁶⁸¹ Hostage, helper, holy woman, or whore: there were not many options open to women in Ps.-Basil's day.

For each of the women in this final group of the miracle collection, Thekla performs an empathetic act of kindness. She restores Kalliste's ruined beauty, enables an illiterate woman to read, restores a woman's stolen jewellery, and provides comfort to a woman who is transitioning from married life to a life of asceticism. *Mir.* 44 which catalogues the godly men and women of Thekla's chorus provides the climactic crescendo for the miracle collection. Ps.-Basil writes of these individuals that they are miracles themselves:

The life, the character, and the conduct set by God, either of the men I listed or of the women, are <themselves>

miracles of the Martyr and far superior to the miracles already cited.⁶⁸²

Conclusion

In summary, after having noted that Ps.-Basil's retrospective list in the prologue of the *Miracles* in regard to the types of people helped by Thekla in fact corresponds to the beneficiaries of the miracles, we have also noted several considerations at work in Ps.-Basil's organization of his miracle collection. These considerations may be considered as different registers which Ps.-Basil deftly juggles in the structuring of his collection. In regard to the wonder register, individual miracles vary as to the extent or scope of their renown depending on whether they were performed for individuals or for entire groups or cities and are organized accordingly. Many of the miracles are grouped according to an emotive register, whether they are dreadful and horrifying or ones that are gentler, warmer, sweeter, etc. Still other miracles are organized in descending order in regard to a social register with some being superior to others in that they pertain to people of higher rank such as bishops and priests. Other miracles are grouped according to a geographic register—such as those that pertain to people from the city of Erinopolis. A strong thematic register is also at work in the organization of the collection: miracles about eyes, women, men, literary individuals, etc.⁶⁸³ Several registers can be in effect at one time.

This detailed study of the organizational principles that Ps.-Basil employed in the structure of his collection may help bring definition to observations made by other scholars in regard to the composition of hagiographies. Heffernan notes a “disjunctive or episodic narrative quality” present in saints' lives.⁶⁸⁴ Medieval historian W. J. Brandt

finds the narrative of saints' lives "very difficult to characterize" but notes that they "often manifest a peculiar sidewise movement, a chronic indirection."⁶⁸⁵ The same can be said of paradoxography whose paratactic style Johnson describes as stories that are "strung together endlessly" unconcerned with chronological development and overarching narrative.⁶⁸⁶

At first glance, the *Miracles* collection does perhaps present itself as a disjunctive or episodic narrative with a peculiar sidewise movement and (seemingly) chronic indirection as is often associated with the paratactic structure of paradoxography. Johnson further defines the salient features of paradoxography, which he discerns as present in the *Miracles*, as "discrete chapters that do not connect to an overarching theme or progression" and with "little or no narrative development between these isolated stories."⁶⁸⁷

On the other hand, Johnson, in placing the *Miracles* in the flow of the Herodotean tradition,⁶⁸⁸ cites Immerwahr who writes that, in the *Histories*, Herodotus employed a simple system of external repetition to create a large unified work:

Throughout this work descriptions of single events reach out to find connections with other events, especially at the beginning and the end of the story. Thus Herodotus' style everywhere exhibits the single chain rather than complex interweaving.⁶⁸⁹

The chain of individual events that Immerwahr visualizes as "reaching out" to each other does vividly capture the process at work in the *Miracles*. The "connections" that the single events reach out to find are contained in the various registers that I have identified at work in the *Miracles*. The individual stories in each group that have been "deemed worthy of the blessed dance of the miracles" (*Mir.* 37) reach out and join hands

to form choruses that present various aspects of Thekla. The choruses ask to be led forth (*Mir.* 34, 35, and 37) and to present themselves before the reader thus lending a performative quality to the text. Like choruses presenting themselves at *agones mousikoi*, the miracles are assembled for the express purpose of performance. The author's heartfelt prayer in the epilogue of the *Miracles* underscores his intention that they be performed:

Hereafter, it is up to you [Thekla] also to perform this following request for a miracle along with the previous ones: first, that you receive these small and insignificant writings brought to you from their small and insignificant beginnings and, secondly, that you present (*δειξαι*) them as great and wonderful (*θαυμαστά*).⁶⁹⁰

The miracles were collected and written by Ps.-Basil with an eye to presentation (*δειξαι*). The miracles, as individual show pieces, present Thekla while, in turn, Thekla presents the miracles; while Thekla performs the miracles; the miracles perform for the reader.

The primary goal of the *Miracles*, unlike many other and particularly later hagiographies, is not to teach the true faith nor is it to present a paradigm for social behaviour. Nor are the *Miracles* particularly concerned with ethos. While one might find elements of these characteristics in the *Miracles*, their presence is negligible in comparison to many other hagiographies. The purpose of the individual miracles is to display the *dynamis* of Thekla and thereby heighten wonder for the saint. I agree with Johnson that the overarching theme in the *Miracles* is Thekla herself and that "the miracles are individual glimpses of [her] already established character from the very end of the *Life*" but, based upon my detailed examination of the organizing principles and

structure present in the text, I take exception to and must reject his argument that “nothing ties them together in the *Miracles* beyond Thekla herself.”⁶⁹¹

In this chapter, I have identified a number of organizational principles which tie the individual narratives together. Perhaps their patterns and connections have been obscured by our being conditioned by the form and content of later examples of the genre with the result that narrative structure of the *Miracles* has been perceived (and described) as disjunctive and directionless when, in fact, it is connected and complex.

Notes to Chapter 9

⁶¹⁸ *Mir.* prologue 6-11.

⁶¹⁹ *Mir.* 28.5-10.

⁶²⁰ Marincola (1997), 132.

⁶²¹ Marincola (1997), 132, cites experience and fair-mindedness as two of the other claims invoked as “the mark of a good historian”. Ps.-Basil claims neither of these, only that of effort.

⁶²² Thuc. 2.35.2; Isoc. *Paneg.*13. See Marincola (1997), 152 who discusses the tradition that Dionysius records in regard to Isocrates’ *Panegyricus* having been ten years in the making.

⁶²³ Dawes and Baynes (1977), 185.

⁶²⁴ Theodoret of Cyrrhus, conclusion 7. Price’s translation.

⁶²⁵ Radermacher (1916), 121ff.

⁶²⁶ López-Salvá (1972-3), 236-7. Based on stylistics and lexical items, I do accept the attribution of *Mir.* 45 to the author. I see it, however, as a redactionary addition prior to its envisioned final form.

⁶²⁷ López-Salvá (1972-3), 236.

⁶²⁸ López-Salvá (1972-3), 236.

⁶²⁹ Dagron (1978), 30.

⁶³⁰ For the purpose of this study, we will not be addressing the wonder register in great detail but will provide this very brief summary: Ps.-Basil often remarks as to the range of impact of a particular miracle—not just one person but whole cities and peoples—learn of the miracle and, in turn, “hymn” the Martyr. For Ps.-Basil, the greater the dispersion of the miracle, the more who heard of it, the greater its value and the higher it registered on the wonder scale. See, for example, the end of *Mir.* 9: <As a result of this miracle> “the Martyr was praised, celebrated in song, and was well spoken of throughout the great imperial city” (Constantinople). And *Mir.* 6: “But we are calling to mind these earlier miracles as being more renowned and concerning an entire city.”

⁶³¹ See Theodoret of Cyrrhus (2006), xvi-xvii. Theodoret, like Ps.-Basil, describes his work partly by what it is not as in his Prologue 8-9 (Price’s translation):

We shall not write a single eulogy for all together...we shall rightly compose the narrative of each one individually. We shall not work through the whole course of their actions...We shall not try to transmit to history the way of life...The account will proceed in narrative form, not following the rules of panegyric but forming a plain tale of some few facts.

⁶³² *Mir.* introduction 77-85.

⁶³³ *Mir.* 9; 38; 14; 19; 21; 11; 35; 28; 13; and 16, respectively. For more on the Laestrygonians, see notes 461, 644, and 1148.

⁶³⁴ *Mir.* introduction 77-80.

⁶³⁵ *Mir.* 6.16-29.

⁶³⁶ For example, see Gotter (2003), 204.

⁶³⁷ Dagron (1978), 17-19.

⁶³⁸ That his grandfather Anatolios served as priest of the church in the city of Olba does not secure the little boy mention before the poor ferryman of the preceding miracle. Either this is a case of age trumping connections or it is a result of the social register having been laid aside.

⁶³⁹ *Mir.* 26.8-12.

⁶⁴⁰ *Mir.* 26.47-50.

⁶⁴¹ *Mir.* 27.1, 26-30.

⁶⁴² *Mir.* 27.42-48.

⁶⁴³ López-Salvá (1972-3), 228. A miracle not in this punishment cycle but one that is explicitly concerned with propriety is *Mir.* 20. Ps.-Basil is reticent to speak of the inappropriate conduct of Vitianos' wife after benefiting from the miracle: "Her reason [for her inappropriate conduct] is not proper for me to express nor is it proper for you, those hearing <the story> to learn." This miracle seems quite grounded in reality. Vitianos, in fact, is attested in history and is included in Martindale, *PLRE* (1971) (sv).

⁶⁴⁴ The Laestrygonians appear in the Hom. *Od.* 10. 60ff as thieves who carry off some of the companions of Odysseus to "make them their loathsome meal." Plin. (E). *HN*, also mentions the Laestrygonians including them among people groups who feed on human bodies. The thieves to whom Ps.-Basil refers are most likely the Isaurians who were notorious for their banditry. For more on this topic, see *Miracle* 28 and the notes to *Mir.* 28 as well as notes 461, 633, and 1148.

⁶⁴⁵ *Mir.* 28.66-71.

⁶⁴⁶ *Mir.* 29.35-39.

⁶⁴⁷ *Mir.* 33.60-66.

⁶⁴⁸ *Mir.* 33.74-66.

⁶⁴⁹ *Mir.* 35.27-35.

⁶⁵⁰ *Mir.* 35.43-48.

⁶⁵¹ See Johnson (2006), 141-2, 242. The miracles that he includes in this "interstitial" group are 15, 26, 45, and 46.

⁶⁵² *Mir.* 15.15-25.

⁶⁵³ *Mir.* 37.5-11.

⁶⁵⁴ Folio 6; Codex Vindobonensis med. graec. 1, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna. Anicia Juliana was one of the wealthiest women in early Byzantine Constantinople, a learned woman, a patron of the arts, and a poet-princess. For information on Anicia Juliana see Brubaker (2002), 209-13. See also Bente Kiilerich (2001), 169-90.

⁶⁵⁵ A search of the Diogenes database for the term *Εύχαριστία τέχνων* disappointingly yields no results.

⁶⁵⁶ *Mir.* 38.8-11.

⁶⁵⁷ *Mir.* 41.1-2.

⁶⁵⁸ López-Salvá (1972-3), 247.

⁶⁵⁹ Dagron (1978), 157.

⁶⁶⁰ Marincola (1997), 35, n. 2.

⁶⁶¹ Dagron (1978), 19.

⁶⁶² *εἶπεν ἂν τις ποιητικῶς ἔφη, τις ἂν ὀμηρίδιων, ποιητῶν ἂν τις εἶπεν*, respectively. *Mir.* 13.11-12 and *Mir.* 26.33-4; *Mir.* 6.11-12; *Mir.* 11.31, respectively. For a catalogue of Homeric references in the *Miracles* see Dagron (1978), 157 and López-Salvá (1972-3), 246-8. For Ps.-Basil's references to other classical writers as well see López-Salvá (1972-3), 248-55.

⁶⁶³ Marincola (1997), 16, n. 74, suggests that one consult Peter (1969), 416, for the position that imitation in antiquity was no more significant than the use of phrases and words regardless of context.

⁶⁶⁴ See Ramsay ([1941] 1967), 215.

⁶⁶⁵ *Mir.* 38.11-21. See Hom. *Il.* 1.365.

⁶⁶⁶ Dagron (1978), 129.

⁶⁶⁷ *Mir.* 38.40-5. In his article, Kaster (1983), 301-3, argues that even though the father and his two sons are listed in Martindale, *PLRE* (1971) (with only the *Miracles* as the citation), Solymios is the result of a textual corruption of the name of the first son, Olympios.

⁶⁶⁸ Kaster (1983), 301-2, n. 3.

⁶⁶⁹ This one thematic group—that of lettered men—is not included in the introduction’s overview of beneficiaries of Thekla’s miracles.

⁶⁷⁰ *Mir.* 39.1-5. The reference to Plato is from *Rep.*10.616e.

⁶⁷¹ *Theod. Ep* 27, 28, 38, 52. John Mal. 370-1.

⁶⁷² *Mir.* 40.17-18.

⁶⁷³ Dillon (1997), 103.

⁶⁷⁴ *Mir.* 41.27-8.

⁶⁷⁵ Lefkowitz (1984), 20.

⁶⁷⁶ Brown (1981), 50.

⁶⁷⁷ Because Pindar is writing poetry, he is also able to reinforce his athletic focus with a metrical and musical pattern that captures the tension of the games themselves. See Lefkowitz (1984), 22.

⁶⁷⁸ *Nemean Odes* 7.70-1. Translated by Lefkowitz (1984), 21.

⁶⁷⁹ Lefkowitz (1984), 20.

⁶⁸⁰ *Gen.* 12:3.

⁶⁸¹ *Mir.* 11.18; 11.13; 11.22; 19.4; 24.38 and 11.32; 24.4, 38; 42.6; 42.13.

⁶⁸² *Mir.* 44.47-9.

⁶⁸³ Another possible theme of the *Miracles* that we have left unaddressed, but one perhaps deserving of attention in the future, is that of memory and retrieval. Ps.-Basil’s frequent reflections on his search for the miracles, the difficulty of retrieval and the references to his sources suggest that he thematises memory but further study is required to determine whether it actually is elevated to the thematic level in the *Miracles*.

⁶⁸⁴ Heffernan (1988), 150.

⁶⁸⁵ W. J. Brandt, *The Shape of Medieval History* (as cited by Heffernan (1988), 62).

⁶⁸⁶ Johnson (2006), 11, 204.

⁶⁸⁷ Johnson (2006), 204.

⁶⁸⁸ Johnson (2006), 116.

⁶⁸⁹ Immerwahr (1966), 59, cited in Johnson (2006), 116.

⁶⁹⁰ *Mir.* epilogue 3-11. For the sake of fluency here, I have slightly departed from the literal translation that I provide later in this study.

⁶⁹¹ Johnson (2006), 204.

CHAPTER 10:
FESTIVALS AND PANEGYREIS

***Panegyris* in the Miracles**

Apart from the brief comment by Dagron that at “l’évocation de la panégyrie annuelle [of Thekla] ...le ton des *Miracles* vibre un peu.”⁶⁹² *Panegyris*, in the festal sense of the word, is a hitherto unidentified/unconsidered but overarching theme of the *Miracles*, the understanding of which is important in appreciating the *Miracles* in their fullness. In classical Greek, the primary gloss for *panegyris* is “festive assembly” or “(religious) festival.”⁶⁹³ According to Vyronis, ‘festiveness’ is one of the derivative meanings of *πανήγυρις*: *πανηγυρικός* “festive; *πανηγυρίζω* (counter to LSJ s.v. I.2) “to celebrate, enjoy oneself.”⁶⁹⁴ Indeed, there is a festive spirit to the *Miracles*.⁶⁹⁵

The text, in its entirety, is a panegyric to St. Thekla in which the author-orator enthusiastically regales his audience with details about the saint and her deeds, her festivals, and his participation in them. The panegyric begins in the *Life* where the author has crafted a panegyric within the panegyric (*Life* 27), by way of *ekphrasis*, in celebration of the author’s own city of Seleucia. It has even been suggested that the author may have written the *Miracles* for the purpose of reading them during the annual Feast of St. Thekla as a panegyric to the saint (see *Mir.* 41).⁶⁹⁶

In her attempt to construct a biographical profile for the author of the *Miracles*, López-Salvá describes Ps.-Basil as being entrusted with certain aspects of the festival of St. Thekla.⁶⁹⁷ While she perhaps goes too far in assigning the author-orator an official

function in the administration of the festival, Ps.-Basil was, as Vyronis points out, both an eyewitness and a participant.⁶⁹⁸ It is legitimate to say that Ps.-Basil is passionate about all things to do with the saint and is especially enthusiastic about the festivals (*panegyreis*) associated with her.

In De Ligt's study of fairs and markets of the Roman Empire, he identifies *panegyris* as the "most important verbal clue to the occurrence of periodic markets in the Graeco-Roman world."⁶⁹⁹ The addition of periodic is one of the semantic features of *panegyris*. The result of De Ligt's survey for the term *panegyris* as contained within written sources (excluding those of Egypt) yielded a much smaller catchment area than he expected, one that primarily encompasses Italy, Numidia, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and North Mesopotamia. His findings confirm that *panegyreis* were an integral, important and enduring element of the religio-cultural landscape of Thekla's region of Rough Cilicia and, by extension, support the argument that the conceptual universe of *panegyreis* may well have been a formative factor in the writing of the *Miracles*, as will be discussed later.⁷⁰⁰

***Panegyris* in Context**

The word *panegyris* has a broad spectrum of applications in classical, Christian and Byzantine literature. Vyronis demonstrates from primary sources that it can "refer to a strictly religious festival, to a commercial fair, to a religious festival combined with a local fair, to a festive occasion such as a marriage or political celebration, to a gathering of bishops, or even to an encomiastic speech."⁷⁰¹ While it is to be expected that the meaning of a particular word will undergo change geographically and over time, it is interesting to note that the term *panegyris* has a wide variety of applications even within

the corpus of one author. The fifth-century Christian historian Sozomen used the word, writes Vyronis, “as the equivalent of Easter, to denote the celebration of imperial decennalia, to indicate a public feast of the martyr Peter in Alexandria, to refer to a gathering of bishops, for a pagan celebration, and finally he refers to a *panegyris* of martyrs.”⁷⁰² In his study, Vyronis focuses primarily on *panegyris* in the sense of a “religio-economic institution”, as does De Ligt.

De Ligt acknowledges that it is reasonable to parse the word *panegyris* as *pas* (all, complete) and *ageirein* (to assemble) as does the Byzantine *Etymologicon Magnum* (s.v.) and that, consequently, it ought to mean “general assembly.”⁷⁰³ He argues, however, that even if in the distant Hellenistic past, *panegyris* did at one time simply mean “general assembly,” by as early as the time of the oldest Greek prose, its meaning was much more specific, denoting instead “a festive occasion on which a large number of people assemble in order to attend some publicly enacted religious ritual.”⁷⁰⁴ In the second century, the lexicographer Pollux includes *panegyreis* among the *kairoi hieroi*⁷⁰⁵ and in the fourth century, Libanius emphasizes the sacred nature of *panegyreis* when he writes that they are observed for the god or gods “in whose honour they have been instituted.”⁷⁰⁶ The word *panegyris*, concludes De Ligt, “in the vast majority of cases...refers to the festival as a whole and has a markedly solemn connotation.”⁷⁰⁷

In summary, the written sources yield a semantic field for the word *panegyris* in its religio-economic sense, with the following features: + periodic, + religious, + festive and celebratory, + public, and +/- accessory festal market.

Cassiodorus, in correspondence on behalf of King Athalric (*Variae* 8.33), in the first half of the sixth century, mentions a *conventus* that displays similar semantic

features to those noted for *panegyris*. This particular *conventus/panegyris* was a traditional festival, dating from the Hellenistic period at Lucania in southern Italy. There is a strong religious component to the festival which originally honoured the goddess Leucothea but, by Cassiodorus' time, instead celebrated the Feast Day of St. Cyprian. Cassiodorus is equally enthusiastic in his descriptions of the religious as the economic aspects of the festival and he concludes with an appeal to a certain Severus to maintain the peace at the festival for "both the religion's sake and for the profit of the people." We will further discuss Cassiodorus' letter below.⁷⁰⁸

In the primary sources, while still retaining the semantic features listed above, *panegyris* sometimes seems to designate only a certain part of a religious festival as evidenced by such phrases as "sacrifices and *panegyris*." For example, Lucian (*On the Syrian Goddess*.1) states that his purpose in writing is to identify "the *nomous* (customs) of their (*h*)*iera* (sacred rites), the *thusias* (sacrifices) the Syrians perform, and the *panegyreis* (festivals) they celebrate."⁷⁰⁹

De Ligt suggests that, in these cases, *panegyris* may in fact refer to the "non-ritual" part of a festival. He does not necessarily equate 'non-ritual' with the commercial aspect of a festival but sees it also as including such things as "eating, drinking and holiday-making."⁷¹⁰

The negative effect that the non-ritual and commercial elements of a festival might have upon those who attend are an increasing matter for concern as expressed in patristic texts from the third century when there was an explosion of the number of festivals. The concerns continued unabated.⁷¹¹ In the latter part of the fourth century,

Basil of Caesarea warned against converting the shrines of martyrs into “a common centre for trade” and “a den of thieves.”⁷¹²

Basil of Caesarea also cites incidents of “evil deeds and stealing.”⁷¹³ When it is necessary for the brothers to conduct business, he encourages them to buy local (!) and if they cannot, he cautions them to take advance precautions against temptations that they might encounter at *panegyreis*.

We must strive to ensure that the products of our work are not disposed of at a distance and that we do not go about hawking them in public. It is much more fitting that we stay in one place and of greater benefit both to our mutual upbuilding and the strict observance of our daily life. Consequently, we will prefer to retreat somewhat from the price than go beyond our vicinity for the sake of some small gain. But if experience has shown this is impossible then we must choose localities and cities inhabited by men of piety, so that our journey abroad might not be fruitless. Let a number of brothers, each carrying the products of their own work go together to the designated festivals (*panegyreis*). Let them journey in common that they may spend their time on the road in psalms and prayers and mutual encouragement. When they have come to the place let them choose the same lodgings both for the sake of keeping watch over each other and so that no time of prayer, by day or by night, may escape us....⁷¹⁴

Dio Chrysostom notes the unsavory elements that could be found at periodic public gatherings when he writes about the annual assizes at Apamea:

The courts are in session every year [in Apamea], and they bring together an unnumbered throng of people—litigants, jurymen, orators, princes, attendants, slaves, pimps, muleteers, hucksters, harlots, and artisans. Consequently, not only can those who have goods to sell obtain the highest prices, but also nothing in the city is out of work, neither the teams nor the houses nor the women. And this contributes not a little to the prosperity.⁷¹⁵

Even Ps.-Basil's enthusiasm for Thekla's festival does not allow him to gloss over the negative aspects. He records (*Mir.* 33) a discussion that takes place at the end of the festival among a group of the festival-attendees, in which they are asked to express aspects of the festival that had especially struck them. Many positive things are mentioned but some negative ones as well:

...[one was struck] by the jostling of the crowd, another by the excessive heat, and still another at the accumulation and congestion of those arriving at the awesome sacred rites (*μυσταγωγίας*), and those already leaving, of those returning again, and those leaving again, those who were shouting, those quarreling, those scuffling with one another and not giving way to one another chiefly because of the desire to be the first to partake of the holy rites (*άγιασμάτων*).⁷¹⁶

Many *panegyreis* lasted a period of several days and demanded of their participants "physical stamina, devotion, and proper demeanor."⁷¹⁷ Epictetus of Hierapolis, a Stoic philosopher of the 1st-2nd century, made these observations to the challenges that met festival-attendees:

But you may say, "There are some things disagreeable and troublesome in life." And are there none in Olympia? Are you not scorched? Are you not pressed by a crowd? Are you not without comfortable means of bathing? Are you not wet when it rains? Have you not abundance of noise, clamour, and other disagreeable things? But I suppose that setting all these things off against the magnificence of the spectacle, you bear and endure.⁷¹⁸

The incident of the deacon Glycerius and the virgins dancing at the festival of Venassa that figured as a matter of concern between Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus as it caused "great shame to the pious" is a case in point.⁷¹⁹ Behaviour unbefitting festival decorum could be punished severely. This is strikingly evident in the

case of Orention of Erinopolis (*Mir.* 33) who when asked what had most arrested him about the festival of Thekla, unabashedly answered,

Let each of you admire what he wants of the festival (*έορτής*), but I think that the miracle and marvel I have enjoyed is more marvelous and sweeter than all. For peering out from a spot in the stoa at the back of the sanctuary, I beheld a girl so exceedingly beautiful, so gorgeous or even distinguished and full of charm, that the entire time of the service (*συνάξεως*) my eyes were directed to and fixed on her remarkable beauty, with the result that I prayed only for this to the Martyr: to enjoy her [the girl's] beauty and nothing else.⁷²⁰

In the vision that Orention has later that night, in which Thekla is distributing gifts at her *panegyris*, she addresses him with these words:

Which do you wish to receive from these gifts, my good fellow? Or do you wish for that girl after whom you are lusting and whom you have perversely besought me to possess? Well, then, take <her> and depart. Possess and enjoy the gift.⁷²¹

Within an hour of having the vision Orention a “raging and savage *daemon* (who had taken the form of a girl) leapt upon him flaying his skin so that it immediately filled with worms and pus. Within three days Orention died having “paid the penalty for his licentious ogling and for his insolence and folly towards the virgin <Thekla>.” “So,” we are told, “this drama was ignored by no one” not even the author who was “unnerved and moved to great fear” and who concludes the miracle with “trembling hand.”⁷²²

The letter by Cassiodorus in regard to the *conventus/ panegyris* during the Feast of St. Cyprian was occasioned by a concern for proper conduct:

We hear that the rustics are indulging in disorderly practices, and robbing the market-people who come from all quarters to the chief fair of Lucania on the day of St. Cyprian. This must by all means be suppressed, and your

Respectability should quietly collect a sufficient number of the owners and tenants of the adjoining farms to overpower these freebooters and bring them to justice. Any rustic or other person found guilty of disturbing the fair should be at once punished with the stick and then exhibited with some mark of infamy upon him...Wherefore, both for the religion's sake and for the profit of the people, it behoves that good order should be kept among the frequenters of the fair, since in the judgment of all, that man must be deemed a villain who would sully the joys of such happy days.⁷²³

Improper behaviour was not tolerated.⁷²⁴

Life as a *Panegyris*

While, on the one hand, patristic authors alerted their readers to the dangers that lurked at *panegyreis*, on the other hand, they compared life to a *panegyris* as did classical authors before them. As cited by Musirillo, Diogenes Laertius noted that Pythagoras compared life to a *panegyris* in which some compete, while others are merely spectators, while still others busily hawk their products.⁷²⁵ Diogenes said that, for the wise man, every day is a festival.⁷²⁶ The Jewish philosopher Philo lists the “Festival of the Every Day” (*hapasan hemeran heorten*) as the first of the ten important Jewish festivals. Philo writes that it is celebrated by the virtuous person whose whole life is a “festival.”⁷²⁷ Philo praises people who, unmoved by difficult circumstance, stand above their passions and, consequently, “lead their whole life as a festival.”⁷²⁸ In the *Symposium of the Ten Virgins* by the Greek patristic author Methodius, Thekla reminds the other virgins that “learned men have told us that our life is a festival (*panegyris*) and that we have come into the theatre to put on the drama of truth.”⁷²⁹ The “learned men” to whom Thekla refers may be

understood as both classical and patristic authors. Two comments by Clement of Alexandria draw a comparison between life and *panegyris*:

What a beautiful trade! What a divine market! One buys immortality for money, and in return for the perishable things of the world one receives an eternal abode in heaven. If you are wise, that is the fair (*panegyris*) to which you should sail, o rich man. Travel the whole world, if necessary. Be heedless of danger and trouble, in order that you may buy the kingdom of heaven there.⁷³⁰

Holding festival, then, in our whole life, persuaded that God is altogether present on every side, we cultivate our fields; praising, we sail the sea...⁷³¹

Gregory of Nazianzus is of the same persuasion:

Consider this life to be a fair (*panegyris*). If you trade, there is profit. For what is little is exchanged for more and what is perishable for the eternal. But if this fair is over, you will not have another opportunity.⁷³²

Given Ps.-Basil's love for festivals as revealed in the *Miracles*, he surely would embrace these same sentiments. Not only is *panegyris* an overarching theme in his miracle collection, it was a deeply and widely-held philosophical persuasion in the Graeco-Roman world that was seamlessly assimilated into Christianity.

By the fourth century, the Christian world was marked by the rhythm of its festal calendar.⁷³³ The foremost festival of the Christian year was Christ's Nativity. It is listed in the *Philocalia* (c. 350s), the earliest extant Christian calendar. Gregory of Nazianzus, (*Homily on the Nativity, Or. 38.1-4*), writes: Christ is born, give glory; this is our festival, the feast we celebrate today!" St Ephrem the Syrian declares the Nativity to be "the first-born of all festivals."⁷³⁴ The Epiphany and Paschal feasts were numbered among the most important of the year. And then there were the feast days of the martyrs and saints that

numbered over one hundred by the fourth century. The loci for many of these saints lay not far from Thekla's territory: to the north in Cappadocia, to the south on Cyprus, and to the east in Cilicia.⁷³⁵

The Feast of St. Konon, observed at Bidana of Isauria, to the north of Seleucia, has been described as the most vivid festival account in any source.⁷³⁶ People from all Isauria joined in the torchlight procession with chanted acclamations of "There is one God of Konon. Konon's god has triumphed!"⁷³⁷

But nearest and dearest to the heart of the author-orator are the *panegyreis* of St. Thekla at Dalisandos and at Seleucia and after those, that of St. Paul in Tarsus. Thekla's feast day was (and continues to be) September 24; Paul's, June 29th. Ps.-Basil was not alone in his festival fervor:

And it was the beginning of the feast (*heorte*) of the virgin, when everyone, especially the Cilicians, used to hasten to us (and still do and will do as long as there are people, in honour of the martyr, each for his spiritual benefit, so that the land is crowded and the sea is crowded with everyone, by peoples, and families, tribes streaming together to this place.⁷³⁸

And [Thekla] made his [Zeus'] temple an abode for her teacher [St.] Paul, just as Paul also had done for her in his city of Tarsus, so they could host one another and be hosted in turn and hospitably receive each other's citizens. And so Paul is the host for the people of Seleucia, and the maiden is the host for those of Tarsus; and a considerable competition of a sort exists for these citizens, whether [they ought] to run up to the apostle for his *panegyris* or from there in like manner to go down for the feast (*heorte*) of Thekla. And great is the rivalry that has grown among us all concerning this, one that especially befits a Christian people and their children.⁷³⁹

Ps.-Basil's description of the reciprocal hospitality between the citizens of the two cities echoes the words of Libanius a century earlier in his panegyric to Antioch and its outlying villages:

...large and well-populated villages, populous no less than cities, and with crafts such as are in towns, exchanging with each other their goods through *panegyreis*, each playing host in turn and being invited and stimulated and delighted...⁷⁴⁰

The vocabulary of festivals includes the term *synodoi* (coming-togethers) from which the Christian world derives the designation for its synods. *Heorte*, in classical and late antiquity, the most common term for festivals secular or religious, is also the term most used in the Septuagint and the New Testament to designate (Jewish) festivals.⁷⁴¹ The term *panegyreis* was applied to crown games (*stephanitai agones*), the Olympic, Pythian, Isthmian and Nemean Games, at which for any contest there was only one victor who received the crown.⁷⁴²

The culture of southern Asia Minor in which the *Miracles* were written was highly competitive and shaped by its festivals and games, an integral and defining part of public life, the number of which increased greatly in the third century due to imperial patronage.⁷⁴³ The *panegyreis* of the crown games were also often referred to as or associated with *agones* (contests). From this terminology evolved "the religious conception of competitive excellence"⁷⁴⁴ which perfectly complements the teaching of the New Testament scripture.⁷⁴⁵ For example, consider these lines from Corinthians:

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes (*ἀγωνιζόμενος*) in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.⁷⁴⁶

Consider the language and imagery of *The Passion of St. Perpetua* (c. 203). The night before her martyrdom in the arena at Carthage, Perpetua dreams of herself as a contender in the *pankration* in the amphitheatre of the city's Pythian Games. In her dream, Perpetua is rubbed with oil "as is the custom before an [athletic] contest" and Christ presides over the contest with the wand of an *agonothetes* (chp. 10). A further analogy with athletic competitions is drawn when certain quarreling Christians are likened to two opposing factions of the games (chp. 13).⁷⁴⁷

It is not surprising that Ps.-Basil refers to Thekla's struggles as athletic contests (*ἀθλησιν*) (*Life* 25.41; 27.11; *Mir.* prologue 18). In the opening lines of the *Miracles*, he draws a distinction between the miracles that Thekla accomplished in Seleucia and those of her earlier "struggles (*ἀγώνων*) and trials (*ἀθλήσεων*)." The unidentified author of the *Myrtle Wood*, the addendum to the *Miracles*, makes reference to "the games (*ἀγῶνας*) meant to make martyrs."⁷⁴⁸ The vast majority of the visual representations of Thekla depicts her martyrial contests. Even the alpha-privative adjectives that Ps.-Basil uses to describe Thekla can be linked to a Graeco-Roman tradition in which athletes were honoured with such adjectives.⁷⁴⁹ The rich symbolism of games and competitions coupled with the concept of competitive excellence is captured and conveyed by the term *panegyris*.

Competitive Excellence and the Christian Believer

I would suggest that it is precisely because of the association between *agones* and *panegyreis* that, for the Church Fathers, *panegyris* became the word of choice for “festival.” The “thick and detailed use of athletic imagery” in the writings of the Church Fathers is noted by Poliakoff.⁷⁵⁰ John Chrysostom, in likening the pursuit of holiness to competition, employs a plethora of athletic metaphors.⁷⁵¹ For Chrysostom, “The prophets were the charioteers of the truth; the apostles, God’s chariot-horses; and the church, a spiritual horse race.”⁷⁵² Palladius, just in the foreword alone of his *Lausiaca History* refers to the “unconquered athletes” (3), “the noble athletes” (4), the “inspired athletes of Christ” (5), “and the glorious name of each of the athletes of Christ, men and women alike” (5) whose stories he is about to relate. The imagery of games, festivals, and competition was conscripted by the patristic writers into the Christian conceptual universe and applied in new ways to new situations arising from the advance of Christianity. K. Kalish regards this as a “creative reworking of classical forms” in which “similes are reconfigured, images, transformed and new words emerge from old...that are invested with a new purpose.”⁷⁵³

Peter Brown comments on this process when he writes, “One of the unconsidered strengths of Christianity in the late fourth century was the sensitivity with which it could replicate, in its model of relations with the other world, the social experience of the contemporary Roman Empire.”⁷⁵⁴ Vyronis notes that it was in the fourth century that “victorious Christianity came into open contact and conflict with cultural institutions of the pagan world on the basis of political superiority.”⁷⁵⁵ He describes it as the period when Christianity was “freshly and stridently victorious over paganism”,⁷⁵⁶ especially in

reference to Thekla's triumphs over Sarpedon, Athena, Aphrodite and Zeus. Augustine, in regard to the process of cultural transference with particular reference to festivals, in not so triumphant tones, gives this explanation:

That it might not seem as if we wished to put down our forebears, who either tolerated or did not dare to forbid such excesses of an unthinking people, I explained by what necessity this bad custom seemed to have arisen in the church. For, when peace came [i.e. after 313] after so many and such violent persecutions, crowds of pagans wishing to become Christians were prevented from doing this because of their habit of celebrating the feast days of their idols with banquets and carousing; and, since it was not easy for them to abstain from these dangerous but ancient pleasures, our ancestors thought it would be good to make a concession for the time being to their weakness and permit them, instead of the feasts they had renounced to celebrate other feasts in honour of the holy martyrs, not with the same sacrilege but with the same pomp (*luxus*).⁷⁵⁷

While the term *panegyris* appears frequently in the patristic writings, it occurs only once in the New Testament, in a passage from Hebrews which the author writes to contrast the inheritance of Christians with the lot of those who live under the Law:

You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire: to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them...The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly (*panegyris*), to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.⁷⁵⁸

The triumphant, jubilant tone of the final lines highlights the rejoicing and festivities that await the victorious Christian. The author transitions from Hebrews 11, in

which he presents the great heroes of the faith and their victories, to Hebrews 12 with this exhortation:

Therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.⁷⁵⁹

The late antique church numbered St. Thekla and other martyrs among those witnesses and as having struggled in *agones* and as having triumphed. Gregory of Nyssa, in his *ekphrasis* on the shrine of St. Theodore of Euchaita (*Ep.* 16), describes an image of Christ as “presiding over the contest of the martyr.” By the latter part of the fourth century, over one hundred saints were venerated throughout the Empire. Their *panegyreis*, like that of Thekla, were victory celebrations which encouraged an “overriding ethos of imitation.”⁷⁶⁰ Gregory of Nyssa’s *Homily of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia* ends with a call to such an *imitatio*:

And like the martyrs, may we enter into paradise, since we have passed through the contests confidently, because we are now empowered through their intercession for a good confession of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁷⁶¹

In Gregory’s *Homily to St. Theodore*, he writes that those who know the “fruit of piety” ought to emulate St. Theodore so that they might share the honours that Christ metes out “according the merits of the athletes” whom they were called to emulate. Thekla was one of those athletes.

According to Stephen Davis, “an ethic of imitation consistently informed the promotion of Thekla as a saint in Egypt.”⁷⁶² An entire appendix in his study of Thekla’s cult in Egypt is devoted to cataloging the many women who bore the name of Thekla. He cites material evidence such as combs, oil lamps, and carvings on women’s gravestones commissioned by the women themselves, etched, embossed, and engraved with the image of Thekla and, as textual evidence, the words of Bishop Athanasius in his address to the virgins of Alexandria exhorting them “to abide with the blessed Thekla.” The *vita* of Syncletica of Alexandria, the famous fourth-century desert anchorite, paints her as following in the tradition of Thekla: “One would consider her [Syncletica] the true disciple of the blessed Thekla as she followed her in the same teachings. Indeed, Christ was the one suitor of the two women, and for them both Paul was himself ‘the leader of the bride’.”⁷⁶³ Women gathered around Syncletica, as they did Thekla, to grow in the path of spirituality. *Ampullae* stamped with the image of Thekla that women could take home with them from her *panegyreis* or from holy sites connected with her served as devotional aids and as a daily reminder of their call to an *imitatio Theklae*.

The *panegyreis* “bridged public and private devotion,” according to Limberis, as well as “encouraged civic and collective expressions of piety... and reinforced the proximity of holiness.”⁷⁶⁴ They offered opportunity for spiritual refreshment and blessing. In the *Miracles* (29), Ps.-Basil writes that people hastened to the festival of Thekla “each for his spiritual benefit.” St. Basil of Caesarea lists the activities that ideally would occur at the celebrations such as “praying for one another, doing homage, mourning before God together with others, and making and building up each other with the word of consolation.”⁷⁶⁵ He invited his friends and colleagues to visit him during *panegyreis* for

the local martyrs.⁷⁶⁶ Asterius of Amasea, in his attack upon the pagan Feast of Calends, challenges his congregation to consider what ought to be gained in attending the festivals:

First, we meet to honour the martyrs. Then we do so in order to learn something useful, something that we did not previously know, something from Christian dogma. We do so also in order to be inspired to imitate the piety of the martyrs, or to understand some part of the scriptures or to hear some discourse on ethics.⁷⁶⁷

In addition to the spiritual benefit in attending the festivals, the *panegyreis* were also occasions for “social, political, and economic activity.”⁷⁶⁸ In the *Miracles*, however, there is no suggestion of commercial activity in relation to the festival of Thekla. Vyronis argues that there surely must have been considering the size of the crowd and the duration of the festival but that it is unmentioned by the author.⁷⁶⁹

St. Basil of Caesarea is known to have carried out ecclesiastical business at the *panegyreis* and to have rebuked bishops who were not in attendance.⁷⁷⁰ No one text provides a definite template for a *panegyris*. A composite of the texts, however, suggests the inclusion of such structural elements as processions, sacrifices, rituals, vigils, choirs, preaching, feasting, merry-making and dancing.

The Structure of Thekla’s Festival

Let us turn to the *Miracles* to discover how the festival of St. Thekla may have been structured. First, when was it held? Her feast day in the East is September 24. The annual festival of St. Thekla lasted many days, perhaps up to a week. It is logical to assume that her feast day, September 24, took place during the festival of the Martyr. If that is the case, then her annual festival would have taken place during the third or fourth week of September.

This assumption is strengthened by the internal evidence of the text. *Mir.* 15 tells of the Cypriot nobleman and his family who arrived by ship for the festival and felt confident in leaving the ship to the care “of only two young lads and to the season itself,” “for it was still summer and the cicadas sang” and “there was no reason to suspect difficulties from bad weather.” The sailing season is recognized as being from March to October. The phrase, “for it was still summer” suggests *late* summer—perhaps August or September. Not only was it still summer, it was *excessively* hot (*Mir.* 33).⁷⁷¹ Confirmation as to the date for the festival of St. Thekla comes from an unlikely source. The Byzantine historian, Ioannes Skylitzes, in regard to imperial games held in the late eleventh century provides this comment:

For September 24 was the day of the games because that was when, for the Christians, the festival of the saint and protomartyr Thekla ends.⁷⁷²

Skylitzes is the only source, ancient, medieval, or modern, to date the festival of Thekla. The importance of dating this festival cannot be overstated as it is mentioned repeatedly in the *Miracles* and was an integral to Ps.-Basil’s portrayal of Thekla.

The festival is discussed in seven of the miracles (4, 15, 26, 29, 33, and 41). Included in these miracles are several festival-specific lexical items (some of which will be addressed): *έορτή*, *πανήγυρις*, *σύναξις*, *μυστήριον*, *νυκτεγεροσία*, *μυσταγωγία*, and *άπόλύσις*. The author-orator uses the first two words, *heorte* and *panegyris* in reference to the festival. The challenge is to determine whether he uses them synonymously/interchangeably or whether they are semantically distinct. Both terms occur in *Mir.* 4 which we have already read:

And [Thekla] made his [Zeus'] temple an abode for her teacher [St.] Paul, just as Paul also had done for her in his city of Tarsus, so they could host one another and be hosted in turn and hospitably receive each other's citizens. And so Paul is the host for the people of Seleucia, and the maiden is the host for those of Tarsus; and a considerable competition of a sort exists for these citizens, whether [they ought] to run up to the apostle for his *panegyris* or from there in like manner to go down for the feast (*heorte*) of Thekla. And great is the rivalry that has grown among us all concerning this, on that especially befits a Christian people and their children.⁷⁷³

Given the parallels and reciprocity highlighted in this passage, one might expect that the two words are synonymous. On the other hand, perhaps the celebration (*panegyris*) in honour of St. Paul differs from that of the celebration (*heorte*) for Thekla in some way. In *Mir.* 26, St. Paul is said to arrive from Rome at his *panegyris* in Tarsus by fiery chariot. During the *panegyris* he receives honours and distributes gifts, after which he departs:

...the great city of Tarsus also experiences this miracle [arrival by fiery chariot] when the divine Paul from the great imperial city of Rome in the same way [by chariot] visits that place [Tarsus], and in this way he especially honours his city, his sanctuary and his *panegyris*, and shows to those honouring [him] that he himself is pleased by the *panegyris* and that he has accepted the sacred honours. And in turn, he has given the most beautiful <gifts> in return for them.⁷⁷⁴

The passage seems to depict Paul's *panegyris* as a single ceremony rather than a celebration extending over several days.

Both *heorte* and *panegyris* also occur in *Mir.* 15. We learn that the Cypriot family that arrived by ship for the festival of Thekla came to see the *heorte* and when they disembarked most of the sailors did so as well out of their [the sailors'] desire [to

observe] the holy *panegyris*. After the household and sailors had left for the *panegyris*, a huge storm arose and threatened the ship. While everyone was *πανηγυρίζοντας*, Thekla worked a miracle and saved the ship. After all had *πανηγυρίσαι*, they returned to the ship and learned of the miracle.⁷⁷⁵ Are *heorte* and *panegyris* used interchangeably in this passage? An object of note is the designation of the *panegyris* as holy (*hieras*), while nowhere in the text is *hiera* used in reference to *heorte*. Also, the references to the participation of the family and the sailors can (but do not necessarily require to) be interpreted as time-specific suggesting that they attended a particular part of the festival, namely the *panegyris*.

The next miracle (26) under consideration does not occur at Seleucia but at nearby Dalisandos where Thekla, we are told, has another *temenos* including a *nymphetērion* and sanctuary (*ναός*) where an annual *panegyris*, one that is “illustrious, well-known and well-attended,” is held in her honour. Thekla “hastens down from Seleucia” to be there and (the implication is ‘straightway’) enters into the sanctuary and once she has completed (*ἐπιτελέσασα*) the *panegyris* by the customary distribution of gifts, she returns to Seleucia. As in the previous miracle, the observance of the *panegyris*, in contrast to passages referring to the *heorte*, seems to be of a relatively short and specific duration: Thekla dramatically arrives at Dalisandos by fiery chariot during the night vigil, proceeds directly to the sanctuary where the *panegyris* is held and at which she distributes gifts, after which she returns forthwith to Seleucia.

Is, then, the *panegyris* a specific event during the festival (*heorte*)—an event that is especially graced by Thekla’s presence at which she presents gifts to the attendees as does Paul at his *panegyris* in Tarsus? In the miracle accounts, Thekla’s presence is

mentioned only in relation to the *panegyris* but not to the *heorte*. She makes an appearance and effects a miracle on the day the Cypriot family and the sailors attend her *panegyris*. We know that Thekla is present at the night vigil and *panegyris* at both Dalisandos and Seleucia. In the *Miracles*, the night vigils are always mentioned in association with the *panegyris*. This link appears again in *Mir.* 29 in which a godly man by the name of Castor has a vision during the night vigil of the *panegyris*.

Similar elements are present in *Mir.* 33, the events of which take place after the religious service (*σύναξις*) and held on the last day of the *heorte*. Orention of Erinopolis relates to his fellow festival-goers the following vision that came to him during the night:

...the Martyr (Thekla) was sitting in her sanctuary (*ναός*) on a lofty throne of some kind of beaten gold, elevated, <and > she was distributing (*διανέμειν*) to each of those who had come together to the *panegyris* many splendid gifts (*δώρα*) pertaining to her *panegyris*...⁷⁷⁶

The reference to the golden, elevated throne provides dramatic flourish with its double reference: 1) to the goddess Artemis⁷⁷⁷ and 2) to the vision of Isaiah in which he saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up.⁷⁷⁸ Dramatic flourish aside, notice the remaining elements of Orention's vision: the presence of the Martyr, the sanctuary, the distribution of gifts, and the term *panegyris*.

Within the miracles that refer to the festival of Thekla, these elements—the sanctuary (*ναός*), the night vigil (*νυκτεγροσία*), the distribution of gifts (*διανέμειν δώρα*), and Thekla's presence occur only in combination (+/-) with each other and only in direct relation to the *panegyris* and not to the *heorte*. A similar combination appears in the passage about St. Paul's *panegyris* in Tarsus (discussed above) which includes no reference to a festival. This would suggest that, in exception to De Ligt's general

observation in regard to the term, for Ps.-Basil, *panegyris* refers to a specific sacred or holy (*hiera*) ceremony held in a sanctuary at some point during the several-day festival (*heorte*). At the *panegyris* that Ps.-Basil describes, Thekla is in some way present and distributes gifts (by means of her temple staff?) to those in attendance. Vyronis refers to “the giving of provisions from the income of the deity to participants” but he, unfortunately, does not expand upon this custom.⁷⁷⁹

The ceremony (*panegyris*) is followed by a night vigil during which Thekla rides through the sky in her fiery chariot. Might Thekla’s two *panegyreis* and accompanying night vigil occur on one and the same date (thereby reducing the chariot’s carbon hoofprint)? Perhaps on September 23, the eve of her feast day.

The final miracle in which *panegyris* is juxtaposed with *heorte* is *Mir.* 41. It records Ps.-Basil’s own experience “at the annual *panegyris*” during which he was slated to speak and for which *heorte* he had prepared a eulogy for Thekla laced with references to classical literature which she so enjoyed. There was but one day left until “the delivery and presentation” of his speech when he was suddenly afflicted with a painful ear infection—so painful that he despaired of speaking. He experienced mixed emotions for, on the one hand, he was anxious about the actual delivery of the eulogy while, on the other, he was sad that, due to the infection, he might have to forsake his opportunity of speaking! But he need not have worried, for the Martyr appeared during the night, gave his ear a good shake resolving the problem and, against all hope, he found himself inexplicably standing at the *δεικτήριον* (the presentation platform for lay speakers) or alternatively, the *ἄμβων* (pulpit) or *ἀκροᾶτήριον* (the speaker’s rostrum), delivering an admirable speech.⁷⁸⁰

From this miracle, we learn that among the activities to be enjoyed at the festival were presentations by selected speakers, including those who were not yet accepted into the register of teachers and priests. There was an appointed time for them to speak and they delivered their speeches and eulogies from a platform for lay speakers that most likely, given the felt need of the author to identify it for his readers, as if he were giving directions, was situated outside the church. One might even, by a stretch of the imagination, wonder whether these oratorical presentations were part of a competition. Nothing in the text prevents such a suggestion. Dagron envisions it as a sort of encomiastic competition in honour of St. Thekla.⁷⁸¹

In addition to the presentation by speakers, the *panegyris* and the night vigil, what other events made up the festival? The *ekphrasis* in *Mir.* 26 records the activities enjoyed at Dalisandos including picnics in the shade as well as frolicking and dancing on the lawn. *Mir.* 33 provides an illuminating list of activities the festival-attendees particularly enjoyed at Seleucia:

When the festival (*έορτής*) and the religious service (*συνάξεως*) had concluded, ...each person, as is usually the case, was struck by some <particular> aspect of the festival; one by the brilliance and joyousness of it, another by the great crowd of those who had assembled, still another by the large gathering of the bishops, and another by the learning of the preachers and another at the euphony of the psalm-chanting, another at the length of the night vigil (*νυκτεγροσίας*), another at the order and the arrangement of the rest of the liturgy, and another by the intensity of those praying, and yet another by the jostling of the crowd, another by the excessive heat, and still another at the accumulation and congestion of those arriving at the awesome sacred rites (*μυσταγωγίας*), and those already leaving, of those returning again, and those leaving again, those who were shouting, those quarreling, those scuffling with one another and not giving way to one another chiefly

because of the desire to be the first to partake of the holy rites (*ἀγιασμάτων*).⁷⁸²

The phrase “the rest of the liturgy” following the reference to the night vigil, by implication, suggests that there was some element of liturgy involved with the night vigil. One participant noted above the “length of the night vigil” which draws a distinction between a *nuktegersia* and a *pannychis* (an all night vigil). We also learn that during the festival there was psalm-chanting, prayer, preaching, sacred rites (*mustagogiae*) and the participation in the sacraments (*hagiasmata*), a *panegyris* at which gifts were distributed to the participants. The final day of the festival, the *apolusis* or dismissal,⁷⁸³ which the author calls a “holiday” culminated in a religious service (*sunaxis*) after which people ate together. Whether this was an official feast or casual dining, we are not told; pagan festivals, however, often concluded with a feast.⁷⁸⁴

Some general observations can be made from the seven miracles that make reference to the festival of St. Thekla: it was annual, well-attended, joyous, crowded, and “brilliant” (*lampron*) (*Mir.* 26; 33.). Many festivals of the day were described as “brilliant.”⁷⁸⁵

In regard to night vigils, St. Ephrem, writes, “Keep vigil as bright ones on this bright night; for even if its colour is black, still it is splendid in its power. One who splendidly watches and prays in the darkness is wrapped in hidden brilliance in the midst of the visible darkness.” (*Hymn* 1.72-4 of the *Hymns on the Nativity*). At the *pannychis* (all-night vigil) at the sanctuary of Cosmas and Damien, *κηρωτή* (wax) was distributed to the participants (*Mir. Côme et Damien* 26; 30).⁷⁸⁶ The candles would have pierced the darkness. In miracle accounts, in general, in regard to night vigils, the emphasis, so

spiritually appropriately, seems to be not on the darkness but rather on the light. This theme is clear in 2 Cor. 4:6 For, God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

Ps.-Basil also uses the word *lampros* in regard to the quality of victory that Croesus sought from the Apolline oracle (*Mir.* introduction.) and as a description for those suppliants of Thekla's who were of noble (*lampros*) birth: Aba and Tigriane (*Mir.* 18) and Bassiane (*Mir.* 19).⁷⁸⁷

Conclusion

Though "the *panegyris* and its rites concentrated holiness in space and time,"⁷⁸⁸ even when a *panegyris* had officially drawn to a close it could still be celebrated by devotees. Gregory of Nyssa confirms this in his description of the traffic at the shrine of St. Theodore: [people came] "like ants all year long, since it was known as a healing shrine for all sorts of diseases, a storehouse for those in need, an inn for the weary, and an unceasing festival for those celebrating."⁷⁸⁹

As noted at the outset of this section, Ps.-Basil weaves a festal thread throughout his miracle collection. The conceptual universe of *panegyris* informs and shapes Ps.-Basil's writing of the *Miracles*. Different aspects of *panegyris* that appear in the *Life & Miracles* include sacred groves, festival memorabilia, victor crowns, and dance. As will be discussed below, Ps.-Basil shapes his miracle collection in groups of "choruses" that he presents to his audience: there is pyrrhic, tragic; comedic, etc. The miracles as choruses vie for the reader's attention: some are brilliant; some, cheerful; and some, tragic that threaten to upset the festive spirit of the *Miracles*. Ps.-Basil creatively chose

“chorus” as one of the organizing principles for the collection in much the same way that Pindar chose athletics for his *Pythian Odes*. The *Miracles*, especially in the transitions, pulse with the palpable energy of festivals. Dagron was not so far off the mark when he noted that the tone of the collection vibrated a bit at the evocation of festivals.⁷⁹⁰

Notes to Chapter 10

⁶⁹² Dagron (1978), 78.

⁶⁹³ See *LSJ* s.v. *πανήγυρις*.

⁶⁹⁴ Vyronis (1981), 196. This gloss on *πανηγυρίζω* runs counter to that of *LSJ* (s.v. I.2). See also De Ligt (1993), 36, n. 10; Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 3.7 and Plut. *Eum.* 13.11.

⁶⁹⁵ The text of the *Miracles* is distinctly positive (compared to say that of Cosmas and Damian or Cyrus and John) and avoids the religious controversies and debates of its time. It does, however, present clearly orthodox creeds and statements of faith in the *Miracles*.

⁶⁹⁶ The showcasing of written work was a normative part of pagan celebration in the Graeco-Roman world as evidenced by Dio Chrysostom's (*Or.* 27.5) observation that "at *panegyreis*...some display their own arts and crafts, while others show off their accomplishments, many of them reciting poems, both tragedies and epics and many other prose works." (trans. from De Ligt (1993), 58) Within the Christian culture of the day, saints' *acta* and *vitae* were publicly read on special occasions. It was the pilgrim Egeria's custom, upon reaching the various holy sites, to have the particular *acta*, *vita*, scripture or text appropriate to that place publicly read. She and her companions read the entire *Acts of Thekla* at Meriamlik (chp. 23), and at Edessa, the *Acts of Thomas* and the letter of Abgar (chp. 19). In the *Itin.* (chp. 20), an implicit distinction is made, however, between the status of scripture and the other texts, when the bishop of Carrhae/Haran explains that the information about when Nahor and Bathuel arrived there is not stated in the "canonical scriptures" (*Scriptura canonis*). In the mid-seventh century, Archbishop Paul of Crete's stopover at Tremithus of Cyprus, during his voyage from Egypt to Constantinople, coincided with the feast day of St. Spyridon (c. fourth century) at which he heard the first public reading of the saint's *vita* written by Theodore of Paphos (see Papacostas (2001), 114, who cites van den Ven (1953), 12-13; 53-6; 71-3). A further thought: might Bishop Basil of Seleucia's no-longer-extant biographical poem of Thekla noted by Photius have been prepared for presentation at her *panegyris*?

⁶⁹⁷ López-Salvá (1972-3), 223.

⁶⁹⁸ Vyronis (1981), 200.

⁶⁹⁹ De Ligt (1993), 35.

⁷⁰⁰ Ramsay ([1941] 1967), 217 cites E. Curtius in detailing "the immense influence" festivals "exerted in the development of Hellenism. The celebration of festivals in eastern Asia Minor can be dated to its distant past for which exists an elaborate and well-documented festival tradition. The Hittite kingdom of Anatolia which directly influenced the Luwian culture (whose kingdom of Kizzuwatna in southern Asia Minor geographically predates the Isaurian) is known to have had an extensive liturgical calendar and lengthy festivals—up to 38 days! There are three types of Hittite sacred texts: ones dealing with Hittite mythology, 2) texts with magic rituals and 3) festival texts describing not only Hittite but Hurrian and Luwian festivals, and their accompanying liturgy. These ancient liturgies presupposed the presence of the royal couple or of at least the king. The texts in detail address royal protocol and the king's progress throughout his kingdom to various festivals that included sacred rites, entertainment, music, races and various athletic competitions. See Johnston (2004), 193, 381-2, 610-11, and 631 for a quote about the king's progress and mention of a dancer who turns around once as the king reaches the portico. According to Elsner and Rutherford (2005), 10, pilgrimage up mountains was an important feature of Hittite religion, and one festival text contains a "sequence of songs performed by a chorus of girls during their ascent."

⁷⁰¹ Vyronis (1981), 198-200.

⁷⁰² Vyronis (1981), 198-9.

⁷⁰³ De Ligt (1993), 35. See also n. 6 of same page for citations of discussions by other scholars. For more on choruses in ancient Greece, see Calame (1997).

⁷⁰⁴ De Ligt (1993), 35.

⁷⁰⁵ Pollux, *Onomasticon* A. 34.

⁷⁰⁶ *Lib. Descr.* 29.5 in De Ligt (1993), 36. See De Ligt (1993), 36 n. 8 for a list of primary source texts that emphasize the religious character of *panegyris*. As Alison Jeppesen-Wigelsworth pointed out, Tertullian also wrote on this theme in Chapter 5 of *De Spectaculis*.

⁷⁰⁷ De Ligt (1993), 36.

⁷⁰⁸ Gregory of Tours describes a festival-cum-fair at Edessa (*Glor. Mart.* 32 (PL 71.733) that allowed tax-free trade over a thirty-day period during the annual feast of St. Thomas. Some accessory festival markets, initially aimed at providing for the immediate needs of festival-attendees, did develop over time into actual commercial fairs and are often glossed in Latin as *mercatus*. See De Ligt (1993), 38. Purely commercial fairs included the annual interregional fairs at Batnae in northern Mesopotamia and at Amida, both described by Ammianus Marcellinus (*Histories* 14.3.3 and 18.8.13), as well as the forty-day fair at Aigai in Cilicia. The fair at Aigai was attended by significant numbers of maritime merchants from the Empire's western provinces, see De Ligt (1993), 69, and is attested by two unrelated sources: the Syrian Bishop Theodoret of Cyrhus in the mid-fifth century as well as the mid-sixth-century pilgrim Theodosius. See Theod. *Ep.* 70 and Theodosius, *De Situ Terrae Sanctae*, c. 32. This fair initially may have been connected to the famous temple of Asclepius (see De Ligt (1993), 69, n. 60 for citations for this argument.) De Ligt (38, n. 18) writes, "In modern Greek the word *panegyri* can still mean either '(patronal) festival' or 'fair'. See *The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Greek*, repr. Oxford 1983, s.v."

⁷⁰⁹ See De Ligt (1993), 36, n. 12 for other illustrations and their citations. Lucian is describing a spring festival that dated to pre-Hellenistic times at Hierapolis, the religious centre of Roman Syria, to which even Cilicians and Cappadocians take votive offerings.

⁷¹⁰ De Ligt (1993), 36-7.

⁷¹¹ *Bas. Reg. Fus.: Interrog.* 39. De Ligt (1993), 58.

⁷¹² See Matt. 21:13. A twelfth-century canon refers to these fourth-century instructions from Basil as commercial aspects threatened the festivals: "Take note of this present canon for those who trade in the perfume shops and barbershops of the most holy Great Church and even more inside it. Similarly take note of this canon for those who come to festivals and *panegyreis* occurring everywhere and who take as an excuse for commercial transactions the worship of the saint being celebrated at that time. Such are deserving of great punishment. And the great Basil greatly forbids this in his [work on] asceticism. Read the section which writes thus, concerning the commercial transactions in the 'synod,' and which says in part these things: 'Since others, having anticipated, corrupted the established custom on the occasion of the saints and instead of praying they make of that period and land a market, *panegyris* and commerce'."—Rallès and Potlès (1868), 480-3; cited in Vyronis (1981), 212-3, as further cited by Duncan Flowers (1990), 138 and n. 29.

⁷¹³ *Bas. Ep.* 286.

⁷¹⁴ *Bas. Reg. Fus.: Interrog.* 39, PG 31.1020b-c. Translated by Silvas (2005), 249.

⁷¹⁵ Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.15-6, Loeb translation adapted by De Ligt (1993), 254.

⁷¹⁶ *Mir.* 33.19-25.

⁷¹⁷ Limberis (2006), 43.

⁷¹⁸ Epictetus, *Disc.* 1.6.26-8 (<http://classics.mit.edu/Epictetus/discourses.1.one.html>).

⁷¹⁹ *Bas. Ep.* 169: Basil to Gregory. Translated by Roy J. Deferrari, *LCL* vol. 2.441. For more on the scandal, see *Ep.* 170: Basil to Glycerius and *Ep.* 171: Basil to Gregory.

⁷²⁰ *Mir.* 33.27-34.

- ⁷²¹ *Mir.* 33.44-7.
- ⁷²² *Mir.* 33.61 and 64-6.
- ⁷²³ Cassiodorus, *Variae Book 8, Letter 33*, trans. by Hodgkin (1886).
- ⁷²⁴ Inscriptions from pagan *panegyreis* also testify to the punishments meted out for indecorous behaviour. See Ramsay ([1941] 1967), 217-8.
- ⁷²⁵ Musirillo (1946), 220, n. 6. See De Ligt (1993), 243-4, for translation. Diog. Laert. 6. <<http://classicpersuasion.org/pw/diogenes/dlpythagoras.htm>> See also Luc. *Hdt.*1; Iambl. *VP.* 12.58; Epict. *Disc.* 2.1423-5; Cic. *Tusc.* 5.3.9 as cited in Dillon (1997), 228, n. 9.
- ⁷²⁶ Plut. *De tran. anim.* 4 and 20.
- ⁷²⁷ Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 2.41. Although Philo uses the word *heortai* for festivals instead of *panegyreis*. His lexical choice may well be influenced by the fact that *heortai* is the main word used for festivals in the Septuagint. J. Leonhardt (2001), 18, has identified Philo's semantic field for the term *heorte* and it corresponds to that for the term *panegyris* in the other primary sources under consideration in our study.
- ⁷²⁸ Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 2.44f. See Leonhardt (2001), 26. Leonhardt argues (27) that in this thought Philo echoes that of Plato in the *Nomoi* (828b) in which Plato equates daily sacrifices to the celebration of a festival every day.
- ⁷²⁹ Meth. *Symp.* 8.1, p. 105. In Meth. *Symp.* 8.2, p. 106, the intent of the message is that those who are incontinent "will remain outside the mysteries, uninitiated into the drama of truth."
- ⁷³⁰ Clem. Al. *Quis dives* 32.1-2, PG 9.637b-c, trans. by De Ligt (1993), 248.
- ⁷³¹ Clem. Al. *Stromata* 8.
- ⁷³² Greg. Naz. *Carm.* 2.33, PG 37.930a, trans. by De Ligt (1993), 248, where De Ligt also provides an extensive list of citations from patristic texts that link life with a *panegyris*.
- ⁷³³ Mitchell (1990), 183-93, notes a corresponding explosion of the number of pagan festivals and games during the second and third centuries in Asia Minor.
- ⁷³⁴ Ephrem (1989), *Hymn 22* = McVey (1989), 179.
- ⁷³⁵ For a survey of the eastern saints, see Maraval (1985).
- ⁷³⁶ See Foss (2002), 135-6.
- ⁷³⁷ For the account of the festival, see Halkin (1935), 369-74.
- ⁷³⁸ *Mir.* 29. 17-22.
- ⁷³⁹ *Mir.* 4. 4-13.
- ⁷⁴⁰ Libanus, *Or.* 11.230 in De Ligt (1993), 127.
- ⁷⁴¹ Easterling and Muir (1985), 100-101.
- ⁷⁴² See 1 Corinthians 9:24-7. The twelfth-century author of the *Timarion* conceptualizes the *panegyris* of St. Demetrios as a parallel to the games when he writes: "The Demetria are a feast (*εοοτη*), just as the Panathenaia [were] in Athens and the Panionia among the Milesians." See Vyronis (1981), 206.
- ⁷⁴³ The festivals and games were particularly endemic to the Greek East. Theodoret *HR* 10.3, records the emperor Julian's visit in the late fourth century to the seven day festival at Daphne.
- ⁷⁴⁴ Easterling and Muir (1985), 103.
- ⁷⁴⁵ See Hebrews 12, discussed below, 1 Corinthians 9:24-7, and 2 Timothy 4:7-8.
- ⁷⁴⁶ 1 Corinthians 9:24-7.
- ⁷⁴⁷ For more on the text, see Robert (1982), 228-76, and especially 53ff.
- ⁷⁴⁸ *Myrtle Wood* 15.
- ⁷⁴⁹ See Robert (1986), 203-4 and 242.
- ⁷⁵⁰ Poliakoff (1984), 58.
- ⁷⁵¹ According to Poliakoff (1984), 51, "literally hundreds." This is perhaps due in part to the influence of Libanius, his former teacher, who often makes reference to the *palaestra* (Poliakoff (1984), 51-3).

⁷⁵² Kazhdan (1990), 66.

⁷⁵³ Kalish (2010). Kalish calls this process or “convergence of traditions,” “melding,” a combination of the two words, “melt” and “weld.” For a detailed examination of the assimilation of athletic terminology by the Church, see Merkelbach (1989), 17-18 and Merkelbach (1975), 108-36. Merkelbach’s position is that through the metaphor of sport, Christianity proclaimed the excellence of its athletes over those of the pagans.

⁷⁵⁴ Brown (1981), 62.

⁷⁵⁵ Vyronis (1981), 209.

⁷⁵⁶ Vyronis (1981), 200.

⁷⁵⁷ Augustine, *Ep.* 29.8f. “On the Feast of St. Leontios.” Trans. Macmullen (1997), 114-15.

⁷⁵⁸ Heb. 12:18-23.

⁷⁵⁹ Heb. 12:1-3.

⁷⁶⁰ Limberis (2006), 41.

⁷⁶¹ Gr. of Nyss. *Homily of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia* in Krueger (2010), 44.

⁷⁶² Davis (2001), 192-4.

⁷⁶³ *Life of The Blessed and Holy Syncretica* by Pseudo-Athanasius, ed. Elizabeth Bryson Bongie, p 11.

⁷⁶⁴ Limberis (2006), 41.

⁷⁶⁵ Bas. *LR* 39.

⁷⁶⁶ Bas. *Ep.* 176.

⁷⁶⁷ Asterius. *Homily* 4.1. PG 40.195 in Vyronis (1981), 211.

⁷⁶⁸ Limberis (2006), 41.

⁷⁶⁹ Vyronis (1981), 200-1. The only reference in the whole of the *Miracles* to commercial activity at Thekla’s *temenos* is to the soaps sold in front of her church which Thekla encouraged Kalliste to use to recover from her disfigurement and regain her beauty. *Mir.* 42.

⁷⁷⁰ Bas. *Epp.* 100, 142, 176, and 252.

⁷⁷¹ The fair at Aigai was also on the coast and was held in September—with merchant ships arriving from the west.

⁷⁷² Ioannes Skylitzes, *Continuatio Scylitzae*, Tsolakes (1968), 107 lines 13, 28. For more on Skylitzes, see Wortley (2010). Skylitzes’ *Continuatio*, however, that covered the years 1070 to 1096 is outside the focus of Wortley’s book. Tsolakes (1968) provides a Greek edition. The text of the *Continuatio* is also found in the *CShB*. For a partial French translation, chapters 1-32, see H. Gregoire, *Byzantion* 28 (1958), 325-62. I appreciate Dr. Wortley’s assistance and thoughtful responses to my questions in regard to Skylitzes.

⁷⁷³ *Mir.* 4. 4-13.

⁷⁷⁴ *Mir.* 26. 40-6.

⁷⁷⁵ *Mir.* 15. 45-7.

⁷⁷⁶ *Mir.* 33. 49-52.

⁷⁷⁷ An epithet for Artemis is the “gold-throned” (*chrysothronos* at *Iliad* 9.533) and whose handmaid Thekla is mistaken to be in the Myrtle Wood. See Hom. *Il.* 1.611 for *chrysonothos* as an epithet for Hera.

⁷⁷⁸ See Isa. 6:1ff.

⁷⁷⁹ Vyronis (1981), 208 and n. 55. Vyronis (1981), 224, notes the “counter” gifts at the nineteenth-century festival at which the jewelers, having made donations, receive a plate of food, as do the pilgrims who donated their produce.

⁷⁸⁰ *Δεικτήριο* is a derivative of *δεικνύω* “to show” and in this particular case, perhaps, “to showcase.” The term *ἀκροατήριο* appears in Acts 25:23 in the sense of “audience room” in which Paul appears before Agrippa and Berenice to present his case. From this passage, Johnson (2006), 167,

following Dagron (1978), 399, n. 7, envisions the presence of a “lay-reader status in the Seleucian church,” and to which Ps.-Basil makes reference again in the epilogue (31-41), the participants of which present *encomia* at the festival of St. Thekla.

⁷⁸¹ Dagron (1978), 399 and n. 7.

⁷⁸² *Mir.* 33. 1-35. A *nuktegersia* is distinct from a *pannychis*, an all-night vigil.

⁷⁸³ Dagron (1978), 79, n.1. equates *apolusis* with *dimissio*.

⁷⁸⁴ In *Mir.* 12, the divine mysteries are implicitly linked with communion/ Eucharist. Dagron (1978), 377 and n. 3, citing *Mir. Côme et Damien* 5, equates communion with the *mystagogia* while the *hagiasmata* seems to be the *mysteries* that the *catechuchmens* and neophytes are taught over a period of time in regard to baptism, the sacraments and the Creed. Egeria refers to the mysteries of the Church in Jerusalem during her trip. See Egeria, *Itin.* 98.24, 28; 99.12. It is symbolically significant that, in Jerusalem, instruction one received prior to baptism was held in the *Martyrium*; while instruction following baptism took place in the *Anastasios* as baptism is a symbol of life after death and resurrection. Believers were both literally and figuratively transferred from the kingdom of darkness and death to the kingdom of light and life.

⁷⁸⁵ Derivatives of *lampros* occur twice in the NT in Acts 26:13 and Luke 16:19, and several times as the verb *λάμπω* Matt. 5:15, 16; Matt. 17:2; Luke 17:24; Acts 12:7; and 2 Cor. 4:6. Symeon Metaphrastes likened the brilliance of festival of St. John at Ephesos to that of the stars! See Foss (2002), 141; Sozomen (*HE* 54-5) describes the *panegyris* at the Oak of Mamre as ‘brilliant’; and in the eleventh century, John Mauropos, the metropolitan of Euchaita described the *panegyris* of St. Theodore at Euchaita as brilliant (cited by Vyronis (1981), 202 and n.25: “P. de Lagarde and J. Bollig, *Johannis Euchaitarum metropolitae quae supersunt in cod. Vaticano graeco 676* (Berlin 1882) 131”).

⁷⁸⁶ Dagron (1978), 79 and n. 2.

⁷⁸⁷ *Πανηγυριστής* ‘festival-attendant or -goer’ was rarely used until the fourth century when it was brought into currency by Christian writers. Prior to that, it occurs in Strabo (17.1.17) to distinguish between festival-goers and suppliants at *panegyreis*; in Pollux 1.34; as the titles of 2 Greek comedies, Suda delta 152, pi 1708; and five times in Lucian. See the discussion of this by Lightfoot (2005), 343.

⁷⁸⁸ Limberis (2006), 46.

⁷⁸⁹ See Limberis (2006), 45, but it is unclear whether this quote by Gregory of Nyssa is from *Ep.* 16 or his *Homily on St. Theodore*.

⁷⁹⁰ There is strong textual attestation of dance competitions at various games. Xenophon (*Hell.* 2.4.20-1) links dance and festivals when he writes: “We have shared with you in the most holy religious services, in sacrifices, and in splendid festivals (*heortai*); we have joined dances with you....” For a comprehensive survey of performances, especially *agones mousikoi* and choral lyric performance, at religious festivals, see appendix 1 and 4 respectively of Herington (1985), 161-6, and 181-191.

CHAPTER 11:

CHRIST & SCRIPTURE IN THE *LIFE & MIRACLES*

A Dearth of Scriptural References?

It has been generally agreed that references to scripture and to Christ are minimal in the *Life & Miracles*.⁷⁹¹ Although the major studies on the *Life & Miracles* (Dagron, Johnson, López-Salvá) list Ps.-Basil's citations of classical authors,⁷⁹² all refrain from including a catalogue of scriptural references. Dagron expressly declines to do so suggesting that there are fewer than a dozen references or even inferences to scripture in the *Miracles* and a bit less in the *Life*.⁷⁹³ While Dagron believes that Ps.-Basil wrote for the classical elite of Seleucia, López-Salvá is of the persuasion that he wrote for an erudite general public and that he tailored the *Miracles* to suit the taste of his audience. She suggests the paucity of biblical allusion and reference in the *Life & Miracles* is indicative of the spiritual ambience of Seleucia.

Partiendo de la base de que una colección de Milagros no va dirigida a los círculos intelectuales superiores, sino a la población media en general estas observaciones no son sino un indicio más del nivel cultural de la Seleucia del siglo v.⁷⁹⁴

In Dagron's opinion, the spiritual references that Ps.-Basil makes are to events or people, but not to a deeper sacred meaning, scriptural principle, or thought, and are included not so much in the way of sacred reference but more as a "religious and literary model."⁷⁹⁵ And the reference tends to be, according to Dagron, "plus subtile et moins orthodoxe" than one might expect.

Doctrinal creeds and Christological formulae (e.g. *Life* 7 and 22; *Mir.* 14) are interspersed in the *Life & Miracles* and are expressed in trinitarian tones more reflective of the conciliar concerns of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381) than with incarnational language associated with the later councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon.⁷⁹⁶ Ps.-Basil is silent on the two natures of Christ and refers to Mary the Theotokos only once.⁷⁹⁷ Johnson writes, “There is a near complete absence of contemporary theological language in the *Life & Miracles*. Nevertheless, this absence is noteworthy in itself and is worthy of further investigation.” He continues “...there is no question that, writing as he [Ps.-Basil] is in the 460s, he has taken some pains to leave out more recent doctrinal formulations.”⁷⁹⁸ While noted in the scholarship, the phenomenon remains unexplained. One factor to perhaps consider is that the author-orator was in a sustained local conflict with Basil, the bishop of Seleucia, whose vacillating loyalties caused significant problems during the two years leading up to the Council of Chalcedon (c. 451). Perhaps because of this, the religious politics of the day were distasteful to Ps.-Basil, or even dangerous to attempt to navigate. Another consideration (which we address in the section on genre) is the appropriateness of the topic for his intended audience.

At first sight, the *Life & Miracles* appear to be spiritually disappointing. Scriptural references do not interlace the *Life & Miracles* in the same way they do patristic texts especially those of the Cappadocian Fathers whose internalization of scripture presents itself with every turn of phrase.⁷⁹⁹ And there is a notable difference between the personal, intimate relationship Egeria enjoys with Christ, as reflected in the *Itinerarium*, and that of Ps.-Basil’s relationship to the Lord as recorded in the *Miracles*. In fact, Dagron writes,

“Mais le nom du Christ apparaît au total assez peu dans les Miracles.”⁸⁰⁰ But is there truly such a spiritual dearth in the *Life & Miracles*?

Criteria for Biblical References in the *L&M*

Scholars have tried hard to link portions of the *Life & Miracles* to scripture (as will be discussed below). But just because we *can* draw a link does not mean that we should. We will, however, explore the possibilities. First, let us set some criteria by which to determine what constitutes a biblical reference.⁸⁰¹ I have noted four distinct categories of reference in the text and a fifth that is debatable. For the purpose of this study, I have established the following typology of references:

1. Explicit references to biblical persons or events.
2. Direct biblical quotations or paraphrases.
3. Implicit references supported by shared key words.
4. A common biblical topos with or without key words.
5. A similar thought or event unsupported by key words

Explicit Biblical References

In the opening lines of *Life* 15, Ps.-Basil differentiates between Syrian and Pisidian Antioch in obvious reference to Acts 11:26. He writes, “I mean Antioch of Syria, first to have acquired the beautiful and mighty and blessed name, to be called ‘Christians’.” Acts 11:26c reads, “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”

Miracle 28 makes explicit reference to two Old Testament accounts: one in which God spared the city of Nineveh (Jonah 3) and the other in which He destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). In *Mir* 28, Ps.-Basil compares God’s actions with those of Thekla who also rewards the righteous and punishes the impious.

Another explicit reference to the Old Testament is found in *Life 9* in Paul's first direct address to Thekla as he encourages her to be strong in Christ and to stand against the devil as did "the famous Job."

...have no regard any longer for the tyrant, even if he cast temptation [before] you from the heights, ...But if only a small part of your endurance and of your power in Christ is manifested, he will quickly back off and slink away faster than a word [can be spoken]; he will flee from you more than [he did from] the famous Job whom he revealed as a victor against himself all the time he besieged him with a myriad of evils.⁸⁰²

In *Life 12*, Ps.-Basil refers to Daniel and the three Hebrew children, the biblical Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, (whose names are not given in the *Life & Miracles*) when comparing Thekla's trial by lions and by fire, respectively. Other texts from late antiquity also link Thekla with Daniel. Of Daniel's three companions in regard to Thekla's trials at Iconium, Ps.-Basil writes:

And they say that the children of the Hebrews also, you see, in mighty Babylon of the Medes –three [of them]— once encountered also such a humanity-friendly fire, when God at that time also rendered that fire harmless. But there [in Babylon] this intervention alone took place and the miracle stopped [at that point].⁸⁰³

Ps.-Basil contrasts that with how the whole earth under God's direction participated in rendering Thekla's fire harmless with mists and clouds rain and hail so strong that many of the inhabitants of Iconium perished. God worked a miracle for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in their fiery furnace but the miracle He worked for Thekla in the midst of her fire was greater and had a greater number of witnesses.

In *Life 19*, which addresses Thekla's trials in Antioch, Ps.-Basil likens God's intervention in that city with the lion to His intervention with the fire in Iconium:

Something similar took place also with regard to the fire in Iconium, and if you wish, in Babylon and the three children; for actually that fire was also truly a very hot fire, all-consuming, deadly—for this is the nature of fire—but when ordered by God, it offered to those [Hebrew] children and to her [Thekla] the effect of dew and of dew-besprinkled fresh air.⁸⁰⁴

Ps.-Basil next cites Daniel:

a Hebrew youth who, they say, was once imprisoned with Lions—was delivered safe and unharmed from those beasts, not because the nature of the beasts wanted this but because the power of God brought it about. But in the case of the Babylonians among whom the miracle happened, it was this alone—that the youth did not perish, but here [in the case of Thekla] a battle was waged by beasts against one another on behalf of Thekla; so much greater then is the superiority of the miracle.⁸⁰⁵

The comparison of Thekla to Daniel in the lions' den is an obvious one, as is the comparison to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and the fiery furnace; however, the linking of all three shows a greater depth of spiritual insight and complexity on the part of the author-orator than has formerly been credited.

Another explicit link is found in *Mir.* 14 in which the author compares the prayers of the wife of the unbeliever Hypsistios to those of Hannah, the mother of Samuel (1 Sam. 1:1-20). Both women pray earnestly that God might grant birth: Hannah prays for children; Hypsistios' wife prays that her husband might be born again into the Christian faith. The former prays for physical birth; the latter, for spiritual. Johnson renders this identification with the Old Testament Hannah correctly while Dagrón reads "Anna" of the New Testament.⁸⁰⁶ The context of the miracle renders this connection impossible. It is definitely not Anna but Hannah to which the author is referring when he comments on the Jewish custom of having children.⁸⁰⁷ Anna, on the other hand, was widowed at a

young age and lived celibately in the temple the rest of her life devoting herself to a life of prayer (Luke 2:26). “Hannah” with a rough breathing mark is clearly required.⁸⁰⁸

In *Life 27*, Thekla, in her taking possession of Seleucia and its surroundings, having wrested the territory from *daemones*, is likened to Elijah and his triumph at Mt. Carmel over the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18:16-45), and to John (the Baptist) taking up residence in the desert. Ps.-Basil again links Elijah and John in *Mir. 44* in regard to their exemplary way of life and this time also with Elijah whom Ps.-Basil terms “the greatest of all” the saints.

Life 22 is replete with explicit biblical references. As examples of men who persevered in prayer, Ps.-Basil cites Elijah and Moses from the Old Testament and Peter and Paul from the New. Ps.-Basil directly quotes the words of Elijah (I Kings 17:1) “As the Lord lives, in whose presence I now stand, there will be no rain on the earth except by my word.” Ps.-Basil follows this with these words:

[The Lord] who closed the heavens for three whole years and six months and who kept it cloudless and again reopened [the heavens] and made [them] rain-producing according to his will.”⁸⁰⁹

And Ps.-Basil prefaces Elijah’s words with this statement:

But a holy man and one embellished with a life worthy of God by prayer alone and a few words and not many tears has what he wishes from god—and he brings this about easily and without trouble. Such a one was the renowned Elijah who worked great miracles by speaking some few words and expressing himself in uncouth language.⁸¹⁰

This statement by Ps.-Basil is, in actuality, his own paraphrase of a reference to Elijah and prayer found in the New Testament book of James (5:16-18):

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

The next biblical reference in *Life 22* is to Moses:

Such a man [of prayer also] was Moses who by prayer alone and the raising of his holy hands to the heavens “outgeneraled” an entire nation, that of the Amalekites, and thus again he gave contrary orders to the [Red] sea... for he parted it as a path for his people and brought it together again, doing the latter and the former by prayer.⁸¹¹

Ps.-Basil is citing two different incidents in the life of Moses both from the book of Exodus: the first, from Exodus 17:8-16, the war between the Israelites and the Amalekites and, the second, the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14). In the Amalekite parallel, Ps.-Basil includes the specific detail, from vss.11-12, that as long as Moses held his hands up to heaven in an attitude of prayer, the Israelites prevailed in the battle but whenever he lowered his hands due to fatigue, the Amalekites would prevail. Aaron and Hur supported Moses’ arms until sunset when at last the Israelites achieved the victory. In Exodus 17.15-16, Moses “built an altar and called it The Lord is my Banner. He said, ‘For hands were lifted up to the throne of the Lord’.”

The New Testament characters presented in *Life 22* as being men of prayer are Peter and Paul:

Peter through prayer “raised a dead person [Tabitha/Dorcas of Joppa (Acts 9: 36-43); opened gates that were well guarded and tightly shut, and melted away the chains that bound him (Acts 12:1-18); and Simon, the notorious magician, the one who seemed to fly up to heaven, Peter pulled down again and besides made him fall on the earth from his airy orbit” (Acts 8:18-24).⁸¹²

Ps.-Basil continues to his next example,

And such a one was Paul who shook up his entire prison from the foundations and making it almost fall (Acts 16:25-40),⁸¹³ and who raised the dead man Eutychos (Acts: 7-12), and who blinded Elymas, a person proclaimed for his sorcery (Acts 13:8-12).⁸¹⁴

In neat symmetry, both Peter and Paul are cited by Ps.-Basil as having raised a person from the dead; received release from prison; and confounded the work of magicians. All these illustrations are taken from the book of Acts. Ps.-Basil adds information about Simon Magus that is not included in the biblical account.

In *Life* 1, Ps.-Basil writes that Thekla came on the scene before other male and female martyrs:

...but second immediately after the apostles and the martyr Stephen, whom the word of truth [i.e. the New Testament] acknowledges also as first; but she is the first of all women, so that Stephen heads the list of the men who have undergone the test for Christ and because of Christ, and Thekla [heads the list] of women...⁸¹⁵

Here, Ps.-Basil, is directly referencing the account of the stoning of Stephen from Acts 7:54-59. This is a deliberate connection drawn by Ps.-Basil because the portion about Stephen is not included in the original *Ath*,⁸¹⁶ but Ps.-Basil has added it to the *Life*.

Another explicit parallel is found in *Mir.* 28. Thieves overran Thekla's sanctuary and having stolen some of the consecrated possessions, fled homeward. Thekla, however, confounded their sense of direction so that they headed in the opposite direction straight into an ambush and were massacred by soldiers. In reviewing her actions, Ps.-Basil explains that Thekla knows both how to reward those who are righteous and how to punish the wicked:

...imitating in this—I think—Christ the King, whose numerous kindnesses, proof of His love for men, but also the proofs of his anger against them, occurred in the past and are to be found still even in our day.⁸¹⁷

As examples, he cites the Lord's compassion for Nineveh on the one hand and, on the other, His anger towards Sodom and Gomorrah.

Direct Biblical Quotations or Paraphrases

Now let us consider references that include direct biblical quotations. (*Mir.* 44).

Ps.-Basil's description of the pursuit of holiness by Samos, a devotee at the *temenos* of Thekla, includes one the text's biblical quotations (Ps. 148.8), adapted slightly by Ps.-Basil:

...there was no stopping him [Samos] neither fire, nor hail, nor snow, nor ice, nor the blast of the storm as the God-inspired David somewhere says...⁸¹⁸

The Psalm reads,

Praise the Lord from the earth...lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding

The LXX renders the passage:

αἰνεῖτε τὸν κύριον ἐκ τῆς γῆς δράκοντες καὶ πάσαι ἄβυσσοι

πῦρ χάλαζα χιών κρύσταλλος πνεῦμα καταιγίδος τὰ ποιοῦντα τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ

The Vulgate reads:

Laudate Dominum de terra... ignis et grando nix et glacies ventus turbo quae facitis sermonem eius/ Laudate Dominum de terra... ignis grando nix glacies spiritus procellarum quae faciunt verbum eius.

The quote was one of common currency, a conflation of scripture with the proverbial description of the Persian pony express system.⁸¹⁹

Another hitherto unrecognized biblical quotation is found in *Mir.* 1.

As soon as the Maiden arrived in the region and reached its borders and took possession of this summit, she reduced him [Sarpedon] again and rendered him silent. And to this day she keeps the multi-voiced oracle-giver silent, having built as a fortress against him the authoritative and royal word—“Silence! (Σιώπα), be muzzled (πεφίμωσο)!” so then, he is silent, still and cowering.⁸²⁰

What is meant by “the authoritative royal word?” Is it in some way connected to Christ the King? And when he writes this, does Ps.-Basil have any biblical reference in mind? At first glance, no; but He definitely does. Thekla’s words “Silence! Be muzzled!” are a direct quote of Christ’s order (Mark 4:39) to the waves to be still. And although in the Gospel accounts Jesus uses these words more than once, this is the only time in which they are used in combination.⁸²¹ The “authoritative royal word” that calmed the waves also speaks through Thekla to silence the *daemon* Sarpedon.

A direct quotation contained in *Mir.* 45 establishes a surprising comparison between Xenarchis, an illiterate and married devotee of Thekla, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Xenarchis receives a copy of the Gospels. Though deeply moved by such a wonderful gift, unable to read, she offers up a half-expressed heart-felt wish:

‘The gift is god-inspired and admirable and incredibly great and like nothing else on the earth, but of what use will it be to me, who does not understand the first rudiments of letters and writing...unless perhaps even now the Teacher of my life...’ And while saying these words she unbound the book and opening it, bent her head as much as if to examine or even to kiss it. The moment she laid eyes on the writing, she began also to read [out loud] so very quickly and so unhesitatingly that all those <women> with her were astounded (ἐκπλαγήναί) and quoted the word from the Gospel, ‘How does she know her letters without having learned them?’ (Πῶς γράμματα οἶδεν αὐτή μὴ μεμαθηκνῖα;).⁸²²

In this account, Ps.-Basil explicitly states that the women bystanders quoted from the Gospel—and, indeed, they did, word for word (except for the required grammatical adjustments in regard to gender)—from John 7:15 which describes people’s reaction to the teaching of Jesus at the beginning of his ministry:

Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews were amazed and asked, “How did this man get such learning without having studied?” (*Πῶς οὗτος γράμματα οἶδεν μὴ μεμαθηκώς;*).

Johnson suggests that the thrust of this miracle is not the parallel drawn between Xenarchis and Jesus but rather the example provided by the bystanders’ as to the appropriate response to divine activity.⁸²³ If this is the primary purpose, I wonder why the author, who so liberally employs the word *thauma* and its derivatives elsewhere throughout the text, and is directly quoting from scripture, chooses to use a different word than the biblical narrative’s *ἐθαύμαζον*?

Another direct biblical parallel including direct quotations is found in *Life 7* which along with its companion passage from *ATH* reads as follows:

Nevertheless the governor attended with pleasure upon Paul’s discourses of the holy works of Christ; and, after a council called, he summoned Thekla and said to her, “Why do you not, according to the law of the Iconians, marry Thamyris?” She stood still, with her eyes fixed upon Paul; and finding she made no reply, Theokleia, her mother, cried out saying, Let the unjust creature be burnt; let her be burnt in the midst of the theatre, for refusing Thamyris, that all women may learn from her to avoid such practices. Then the governor was exceedingly concerned, and ordered Paul to be whipped out of the city and Thekla to be burnt. —...So Thekla, just as a lamb in the wilderness looks every way to see his shepherd, looked around for Paul; And as she was looking upon the multitude, she saw the Lord Jesus....⁸²⁴



And Thekla also is led before Kestillos, while her mother Theokleia is crying out—for this girl to be taken [to prison] and for her also to pay the penalty for an action so unlawful and inappropriate....The proconsul made the following arguments to her [Thekla]:...Why then are you fleeing marriage, such a holy and excellent practice...*Life* 11....Well the proconsul, on the one hand, was earnestly trying so gently and kindly to change the purpose of the young woman but Thekla, on the other hand, made not so much as a single sound....She did not, therefore, exchange at all a word with anyone, and she took her stand—if it is not bold to say—like a lamb before the one who is shearing it without a sound (ὡς ἀμνάς ἐναντίον τοῦ κείροντος αὐτὴν ἄφωνος) without searching for what to say, but, dreaming, you see, of what and when she might suffer for the sake of Christ...And in the midst of these events there was a great silence and Thekla made no answer but Kestillos was at a loss as to what he should do; and while the crowd was marvelling at the stubborn and unyielding [position] of the young woman, Theokleia cried out passionately from somewhere, ‘Judge, why do you delay...Why do you postpone and delay applying fire to her? Let her burn and perish, a girl who has refused a reputable and family-approved marriage...?’⁸²⁵

These two passages, the first from the *ATH* and the second from the *Life*, refer to the same episode in Thekla’s life. The account from the *ATH* is notably shorter than that of the *Life*. In the *Life*, Ps.-Basil expands the episode and does so by adding a spiritual dynamic that has gone undetected by modern scholarship but its significance would not have escaped the attention of Ps.-Basil’s fifth-century audience. Although Johnson does draw a parallel between the proconsul Kestillos and Pontius Pilate (see Matt. 27) in their reluctance to press charges, against Thekla and Jesus respectively, calling it “an imitation of Pontius Pilate,” he misses the bigger parallel, one that serves as a foundation not just of this passage but of the entire corpus.⁸²⁶

The spiritual dynamic Ps.-Basil injects lies in his characterization of Thekla as ‘a lamb before the one who is shearing it’ (ὡς ἀμνάς ἐναντίον τοῦ κείροντος). This one phrase is filled with meaning (and, as we shall see, there are several other significant details in the rest of the passage). Ps.-Basil alerts his audience to what he is about to say when he writes, with a touch of trepidation, “if it is not [too] bold to say.” What he is about to say *is* bold, extremely bold. Not only is he likening Thekla’s appearance before the proconsul Kestillos to Christ’s audience before Pontius Pilate⁸²⁷ (John 19:9-11; Mark 15:3-5), but what is more, Ps.-Basil is cautiously advancing an imitation by Thekla of Christ the Lamb: an *imitatio Christi*.⁸²⁸

An examination of the passage is illuminating. The phrase “as a lamb before the one shearing it” is taken from the Bible and it is neither obscure nor insignificant. It occurs in two separate passages: 1) one from the Old Testament, Isaiah 53, a well-known messianic passage often entitled the “suffering servant” and, 2) the other, Acts 8, from the New Testament, which quotes Isaiah 53. Two other portions of Scripture, Romans 8, a chapter that addresses the issue of Christians and persecution, and Ps. 44 which Romans 8 quotes, are often cross-referenced with Acts 8 and Isaiah 53 and can be considered accessory verses. It cannot be determined whether Ps.-Basil was familiar with all four passages or whether he was quoting only from Isaiah or from Acts or whether he may have had both in mind when he cautiously added the phrase “like a lamb before its shearer” to his account.

First, let us consider Acts 8, the New Testament passage in which the phrase occurs. In this account, Philip, under the direction of the angel of the Lord, crosses paths with an Ethiopian eunuch who, as he traveled, was sitting in his chariot reading the book

of Isaiah. As Philip drew closer and heard the man reading, he asked whether the man understood the text which, as scripture states was a passage from the book of Isaiah (Isa. 53.7-8). “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” The account continues as follows:

So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture:

‘He was led like a sheep to the slaughter and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth’.

The eunuch asked Philip, ‘Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?’ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.⁸²⁹

It is this passage (or the one from Isaiah, or both) that Ps.-Basil consciously (we can say consciously because he chose to insert it into his paraphrase of *ATH* and because of his comment about it perhaps being too bold) uses to describe Thekla before Kestillos. The only change that he makes to the phrase from Acts 8 is in regard to gender-specific requirements since Thekla is the antecedent for the lamb.

Notice the triple reference, in Chapter 12 of the *Life*, to her silence:

...but Thekla, on the other hand, made not so much as a single sound, ...She did not, therefore, exchange at all a word with anyone, and she took her stand—if it is not [too] bold to say—like a lamb before the one who is shearing it, without a sound (*ἄφωνος*).⁸³⁰

Thekla’s silence before Kestillos echoes that of Jesus’ before Pilate. In two of the Gospel accounts (John. 19:9-16 and Mark 15:3-5) that record this event, when questioned by Pilate, “Jesus gave him no answer.” The account from Matt. 27:14 reads, “But Jesus

made no reply, not even to a single charge.” Ps.-Basil writes, “And in the midst of these events there was a great silence and Thekla made no answer.”⁸³¹ The silence of the lambs takes on a whole new meaning.⁸³²

In the face of Jesus’ silence, Pilate appealed to him with the argument that he [Pilate] had the power either to release or to crucify him, to which Jesus answered that Pilate’s power actually was granted by God. “From then on,” we are told, “Pilate tried to set Jesus free.” Ps.-Basil draws a powerful parallel with the Gospel accounts by emphasizing that Thekla remained quiet before Kestillos’ questioning and that Kestillos “was at a loss as to what he should do.” Kestillos tried to satisfy, we are told, Thamyris’ interests and his position in the city, Theokleia’s passionate denouncement of her daughter, and his own fear of “the opinion existing regarding the Christians and the gossip [at that time].” And like Pilate who, harried by the Jews, “wanted to satisfy the crowd...” and so “had Jesus flogged and handed over to be crucified,” Kestillos, also wanting to satisfy the crowd, “ordered Thekla to be committed to the fire.”

But the parallels do not end there. The next lines in the passage of the *Life* 12 provide another parallel:

She did not, therefore, exchange at all a word with anyone, and she took her stand—if it is not bold to say—like a lamb before the one who is shearing it, without a sound, without searching for what to say, but, dreaming, you see, of what and when she might suffer for the sake of Christ.⁸³³

Note the phrase, “without searching for what to say” and compare it with Jesus’ words in Matthew 10:18-20:

On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to

say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

A similar passage is found in Mark 13:9b-11:

You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, in both the Gospel accounts above, states that it is “on account of [Him]” that Christians will be persecuted. Recall that Ps.-Basil describes Thekla as not “searching for what to say, but, dreaming, you see, of what and when she might suffer *for the sake of Christ*.” According to Ps.-Basil, in the face of persecution on account of Christ, Thekla, lamb-like, remained silent and did not worry about how she should answer Kestillos.

Both Gospel passages continue with Jesus’ observation (Mark 13:12) that on account of him families will be divided, “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.” In Thekla’s case, it was not her father (who nowhere appears in the story) but her mother who betrays her:

Theokleia, her mother, cried out saying, Let the unjust creature be burnt; let her be burnt in the midst of the theatre, for refusing Thamyris, that all women may learn from her to avoid such practices.⁸³⁴

Ps.-Basil is tying together many different threads concerning Christians and persecution for the sake of Christ, with particular reference to Thekla and her trials and

tribulations. Jesus is “the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world” and Thekla is His lamb. In the *ATH* that corresponds to this section of the *Life* right after Thekla’s sentence is announced and the governor along with the people proceed to the arena, we learn that “Thekla, just as a lamb in the wilderness looks every way to see his shepherd, looked around for Paul; and as she was looking...she saw Christ.”⁸³⁵

The passage from Isaiah that the eunuch was reading (Acts 8), and which Ps.-Basil references, includes two thoughts about the lamb: 1) that it is led to slaughter and, 2) that it is silent before its shearers. The book of Romans (8:33-9) also quotes from Isaiah 53 and its lamb imagery and speaks directly to the subject of the persecution of Christians and is applicable to Thekla’s situation. Ps.-Basil may also have been thinking of the following scripture when he wrote chapter 12 of the *Life*:

If God is for us, who can be against us?...Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?...Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered” (Ps. 44:22). No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.⁸³⁶

In one of the closing chapters of the *Life* (26), Thekla expresses her gratitude to Paul for all that he has done for her and requests that he continue in prayer on her behalf. The last part of her request captures the triumphant tone of Romans 8 and underscores the thought that those who suffer for Christ’s sake are indeed “more than conquerors:”

As for you [Paul], do not cease praying thus and making supplication on my behalf, so that I finish the course of piety right up to the end without embarrassment without shame and reach the kingdom of heaven, and receive as my reward Christ, my king and bridegroom, for whose sake I

have suffered these hardships and perhaps will also suffer them again—and be victorious again!⁸³⁷

Implicit Biblical References

Next we will examine the third category, implicit biblical references supported by shared words. St. Paul's experience of being called to help in Macedonia (Acts 16:9) and Thekla's comment (*Mir.* 12) that she must hurry off to help in Macedonia are legitimate connections. Ps.-Basil changes the parallel to be gender appropriate: Paul is beckoned by a Macedonian man while Thekla is headed to Macedonia to help a woman.⁸³⁸

An allusion to Old Testament scripture is found in *Life* 16. At her martyrial contest at Antioch, "a most cruel lioness" was assigned to attack Thekla but, against expectation and nature "the lioness sat down beside Thekla and began to lick her feet, even being careful with her teeth... lest in some way, even against her [the lioness'] will, she might wound and cause pain to the martyr's feet that were now spreading the good news." Isaiah 52:7 proclaims, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who proclaim peace, of those who bring good news!"

Paul invokes the biblical parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) at the end of the *Life* 26 when he entrusts Thekla to God with these words: "For on this account Christ has chosen you through me in order that He may attract you into apostleship and place in your hands some of the yet-uninstructed cities: for it is necessary for you to multiply your talents."⁸³⁹

In *Mir.* 25, Ps.-Basil draws an implicit parallel between a healing cistern (*κολυμβήθρα*) at Thekla's *temenos* and the pool (*κολυμβήθρα*) of Bethesda described in the book of John (5.1-15).⁸⁴⁰ The pool at Bethesda was known for its miraculous

properties. As the tradition goes, from time to time an angel would stir the waters and whoever should be the first to bathe in it after the angel's visitation would receive healing. Jesus had compassion on a man who had been an invalid for many years but was unable to move quickly enough to reach the pool before others, and healed him.

In this parallel, Ps.-Basil writes that one summer the residents of Seleucia and its environs were struck with an ophthalmic plague that, for some, resulted in blindness. In response to the "pandemic" (πάνδημος), Thekla opened a dispensary (ιατρείον)—a cistern (κολυμβήθρα)—that proved to be the antidote, or the enemy (πόλεμον), for the sickness. As he also did in *Life* 12, Ps.-Basil compares the miracle to one from scripture and finds the one he is recording to be the greater because of its greater field of impact:

But it was not the grace of a poor and beggarly cistern (κολυμβήθρα) that saved one human being—barely—but rather the grace of an abundant and most bountiful source (πηγή). In fact, when all the people stopped lining up when the flows overflowing the cisterns had stopped, the grace of the martyr did not fail, continually receiving and healing...⁸⁴¹

Both Dagrón and Johnson cite *Mir.* 41 as a possible allusion (albeit an odd and bit "sacrilegious" one) to the stone being rolled away (ἀποκυλισθέντος) from the tomb at Jesus' resurrection (Matt. 27:60-28:2; Mark 15:46-16:4; Luke 24:1-3).⁸⁴² The miracle concerns Thekla's intervention on the author's behalf when he was suddenly inflicted with an ear infection just hours before he was scheduled to present a eulogy on Thekla during her annual *panegyris*. In a dream sequence, Thekla provides help and having given his ear a good shake, the pus formed into a ball and was rolled away (ἀποκυλισθέντος) from the winding (σκολιόι) and sancrosanct (ἄδυτοι) passageways (πόροι)—so to speak (ὡς εἰπεῖν)—and he found himself on the speaker's platform. With

the phrase “so to speak,” Ps.-Basil signals that this is an allusion and a bit unorthodox at that. The author seems to be a bit uncomfortably linking something small with something great. That it is a biblical allusion is supported by the theme of the stone being rolled away, the use of the same participle as in the Gospel accounts, the substantive meaning of *ἄδυτος*—“innermost shrine or sanctuary,” and also by the context. Because of the infection, Ps.-Basil’s hopes of speaking at the panegyris and of receiving recognition and perhaps being included on the registry of speakers were dashed, and in a sense, had died. But once the pus was dislodged, or “rolled away,” his hopes were resurrected when he suddenly “found himself” on the speaker’s platform.

Common Biblical *Topoi*

The fourth category is comprised of passages that contain common biblical *topoi* and may or may not contain key words.

Miracle 23 contains a common biblical *topos* associated with St. Paul and the aftermath of his Damascus Road experience. The parallel is signalled by the author’s conscious bracketing “—as they say—.” In this miracle, Pausikakos, a poor, manual labourer who had lost his sight, besought the aid of the Martyr “lamenting unceasingly, imploring unceasingly, indeed, even shouting...” Thekla responded. “With the scales (*φολίδων*) falling away from (*ἀποπεσουσῶν*) the inside of his eyes,” his sight was restored. In the biblical account (Acts 9) Saul/Paul is blinded by a light from a heavenly vision of Jesus. He is led to Damascus where a Christian named Ananias prays for his sight to be restored. Immediately “something like scales (*λεπίδες*) fell from (*ἀπέπησαν*) Saul’s eyes” and he could see again.

Mir. 36 employs a common biblical *topos* in relation to Exodus 17, this time verses 1-7, in which Moses brings forth water from the rock in the wilderness for the thirsty Israelites. *Mir.* 36 relates that Seleucia and the surrounding area were struck by a plague on their livestock. Animals were dying in droves and the people were helpless to know what to do. No relief was in sight:

...but because the difficulty was unmanageable and beyond human capabilities, again the generous and all-powerful martyr [Thekla] at that point took pity on both the livestock that was being lost and those who were losing them, and revealed the remedy underfoot. For she provided <a spring> to gush forth abundantly, <one> not previously in existence, which had not been seen by any of us or by any of our predecessors, and she provided it not far away, not in some other region, but in the place where her very own precinct (*temenos*) is. And this place is a cave <from which the spring originated> situated west of the sanctuary....⁸⁴³

Thekla provided relief, a spring that poured forth “healings and remedies” in the Myrtle Wood. A recurrent theme in regard to sacred groves is the presence of springs and fountains as objects of *thauma*.⁸⁴⁴ Ps.-Basil underscores the specialness of the spring by means of the literary device of repetition with the verb *παρασκευάζω* (to prepare):

*Τὴν γὰρ μὴ οὐσάν ποτε πηγὴν, μήτε παρὰ τινος ἡμῶν
ἢ καὶ τῶν παλαιότερων ὀφθείσαν, ἀθρόον ἀναβλύσαι
παρασκευάζει· παρασκευάζει δὲ οὔτε πόρρω, οὔτε ἐν
ἀλλοτριῷ χώρῳ, ἀλλ' ἐν ᾧπερ τόπω πάλιν αὐτῆς ἐστὶ
τὸ τέμενος.*

This was not just any spring but one especially prepared.

Enthusiastic as he is about the Myrtle Wood and the spring, Ps.-Basil does not attempt to link them to Graeco-Roman myth nor does he employ classical allusions in describing them as he does in *Mir.* 12 where he describes the water flowing from a plane

tree in the courtyard of Thekla's church. That image echoes Aristides' description of the plane tree at Pergamon at the sanctuary of Asclepius (Ar. 410).

But here, in this miracle, Ps.-Basil firmly directs the narrative in a different direction. Instead, he describes how people, after having visited the church, "immediately hasten to that cave" (*εὐθὺς καὶ ἐπ' ἐκεῖνο τρέχει τὸ ἄντρον*) in the same way as would a bridegroom to the bridal chamber, with clear allusion to Christ the Bridegroom and Thekla, His espoused.

It is from this cave, a cave hewn from rock, that the spring gushed forth. Ps.-Basil emphasizes that it was not from of old nor had it been present previously in his time: "a spring...not previously in existence, which had not been seen by any of us or by any of our predecessors." It was a new creation: a present help in time of trouble, grace to help at the moment of need. As the plague had sprung forth, so did the healing.

Ps.-Basil presents the spring as a biblical type of the rock in the wilderness from which God sent forth water for the children of Israel. From the New Testament scriptures, we learn that the rock in the wilderness of Exodus foreshadowed Christ Himself:

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea... They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that Rock was Christ.⁸⁴⁵

Thekla's cave and spring are a picture of Christ. Christ is the Rock and He is the Living Water. Thekla's provision for the people issued forth from Christ Himself. Despite Ps.-Basil's fascination with classical literature, he squarely and unequivocally places Thekla's cave and the healing spring in the flow of Biblical reference.

In *Mir.* 12, the excommunication narrative, Ps.-Basil employs the biblical theme of “three days.”⁸⁴⁶ There is no direct reference by which to link this miracle with the Bible but just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days (Jon. 1:17) and Jesus was in the tomb for three days (Matt. 12:40, referencing Jon. 1:17), so was Ps.-Basil excommunicated for three days. This is a fitting theme for the miracle in that having been excommunicated, Ps.-Basil’s hope for advancement in the church died. By the intervention of Thekla, however, he was received again into the fellowship of the church, admitted to the sacraments, and his hope was, so to speak, resurrected.⁸⁴⁷

Unsubstantiated “Parallels”

Our final category contains three passages that contain a similar thought or event to biblical ones but are unsupported by key words. These three possible parallels are suggested by Johnson. Their validity remains open for discussion until any definitive biblical dependence can be established:

1) In the *Myrtle Wood*, written by an author other than Ps.-Basil, and in the alternate ending to the *ATH*, Johnson sees the disappearance of Thekla into the rock as she flees her attackers in which a part of her garment is left hanging out of the rock as a parallel with the Genesis (39:12) account of the attempted seduction of Joseph by Potiphar’s wife.⁸⁴⁸ When Joseph flees the temptation, he leaves his coat in her hands. This suggestion seems too contrived.

2) Johnson sees a further connection between the healing ministry of Thekla and that of Jesus in the *Myrtle Wood*. The account records that “before the people bringing the sick could open the door of the grotto [of Thekla], the diseases vanished.” About this, Johnson writes, “Healing from a distance was surely in imitation of Jesus’ miracles from

the Gospels (e.g. Matt. 8:5-13).⁸⁴⁹ This connection is not supported by a common biblical theme, key words, or quotations so cannot be legitimately considered for our purposes.

3) Johnson also sees a biblical connection in *Mir.* 18 in which Thekla, in an incubatory intervention, heals a woman's broken foot and then instructs her to get up from her bed and walk (*διαναστήναι δὲ μόνον τῆς κλίνης καὶ βαδίξειν*). As in the previous example, there are no key words shared between this incident and the Gospel accounts in which Jesus instructs a man to rise (*ἔγειρε*) take up his mat (*κράβαττον*) and walk (*περιπάτει*) (Mark 2:9, 11, and 12; John 5:8, 9, 11, and 12). As we have seen already, Ps.-Basil is capable of accessing and applying lexical items from the scripture. He could have done so in this case had he intended such a parallel. It would have been quite simple to use Jesus' words as Ps.-Basil did in other direct imitations.

The three preceding examples suggested by Johnson as having biblical reference are unsubstantiated by our criteria and must be rejected for now.

Summary of Biblical References in the *Life & Miracles*

In regard to biblical reference, of the eighteen legitimate examples we have cited, six are explicit; four are direct biblical quotations or paraphrases; five are implicit references supported by shared key words; and three contain a common biblical *topos* with or without key words. In order of occurrence, Ps.-Basil employs explicit references most frequently, followed closely by implicit ones, then direct quotations, and finally, common biblical *topoi*.

The foregoing examination of biblical references contained in the *Life & Miracles* yields a number of insights. The *Life* and the *Miracles* contain an approximately equal

number of biblical references. In total, there is an almost equal occurrence of references to both the Old and the New Testament. For the most part, Ps.-Basil does not privilege either the Old or the New Testaments. On two occasions he pairs the Old Testament prophet Elijah with John the Baptist of the New Testament (*Life* 27; *Mir.* 44).

Almost all the biblical references in the *Life* were deliberate additions by Ps.-Basil to the original *Acts of Thekla* in his amplification of the text. The *Life* includes slightly more references to the Old Testament than to the New; while, in the *Miracles*, references are equally distributed. Such distribution demonstrates that for Ps.-Basil the whole of the Bible was authoritative and meaningful. Beyond this, the distribution does not provide further insight into authorial intent. Laying distribution aside, then, let us inquire as to the nature of the references themselves.

The Theme of Triumph

A shared conceptual feature common to Ps.-Basil's biblical references is the idea of triumph. The biblical characters referenced by Ps.-Basil were all overcomers and are often characterized as having prevailed through prayer. Consider those cited: Daniel, Job, Elijah, Elisha, Peter, Paul, prayer warriors all. Hannah, the only biblical woman cited in the *Life & Miracles* (besides an invocation of Mary as Theotokos) is specifically known as prevailing in prayer.

The theme of triumph may have been personally meaningful to the author in his conflict with the religious hierarchy and in his desire to advance up the ecclesiastical *cursus honorum*. The *topos* of triumph may also have resonated with those for whom Ps.-Basil wrote in their struggles with plague and other natural disasters, and with the ongoing threat presented by marauding Isaurians.

Biblical bad guys receive little attention in the *Life & Miracles*. In his reference to Mt. Carmel, Ps.-Basil directs our attention to Elijah and not to the prophets of Baal; when the battle between the Amalekites and Israelites is referenced, the focus is upon Moses and the Israelites. In fact, the only bad guys who receive any press in Ps.-Basil's biblical references are the sorcerers Simon Magus and Elymas, and both in the same narrative (*Life* 22). The focus in the *Life & Miracles* is definitely not on the defeated but on those who have triumphed.

In contrast to the *Life*, biblical references in the *Miracles* tend to be less people-centric (Elijah and Hannah are explicitly cited, while Saul is implicitly invoked) and more concerned with the meaning attached to the reference. The references in the *Miracles*, can be roughly divided into two categories: 1) as demonstrations of Christ and His power (e.g. Jesus as King, as the Rock, and as Master of the waves), or 2) as having a resurrection motif (e.g. the stone rolled away, the three-day *topos*. Even the story of blind Pausikakos, by way of its association with Paul's Damascus Road experience, falls into this category; it is specifically stated in Acts 9 that Paul was in the city and unable to see for three days). These categories are consistent with the theme of triumph. So also is the strong emphasis in the *Life & Miracles* of Christ as King.

Christology in the *Life & Miracles*

By means of the creeds that Ps.-Basil weaves throughout the text and by his references to Christ, one can trace his Christological formula. What do we learn about Ps.-Basil's Christology as revealed in the *Life & Miracles*? Jesus is referred to as the King (*Life* 14 and 17; *Mir.* 3, 14, 28, and 35); King of Heaven (*Life* 9 and 17); "our common King" (*Mir.* 3); the king of all (*Mir.* 35); Thekla's king (*Life* 9 and 26); The

word of God (*Life* 1, twice, and *Life* 2); the Son of God (*Life* 1); Thekla's bridegroom (*Life* 9, twice, and 26) and again, by extension with regard to betrothal (*Life* 25); Only Begotten Son (*Life* 13, 22, and 27); our God (*Life* 28); Son of the mighty and most high Father (*Life* 17); Lord Christ (*Life* 17) plus reference is made to His lordship (*Mir.* 2). Also, Christ Jesus is Thekla's master (*Life* 20), her ally (*Life* 9), her protector (*Life* 15 and 22); her champion (*Life* 22); her husband (*Mir.* 28); and her bridegroom as already noted above. *Life* 28 refers to Jesus "our God for whom is appropriate all glory, honour, and power now and forever." In the *Life & Miracles*, Jesus is referred to most frequently in his capacity as King.⁸⁵⁰

The longest narrative on Christ is a lengthy discourse by Thekla (*Life* 22) which Ps.-Basil informs his readers that he is quoting verbatim:

...since it is probably even better [for us] without leaving out anything to use the very words of the martyr; for they have a more magnificent and more theological content than [normally] accords with a woman's knowledge.⁸⁵¹

Thekla's discourse on Christ is not part of the *Ath.* Ps.-Basil has added it. These words of Thekla, then, reflect his own vision and perception of Christ:

For this [Jesus] alone is a pillar of salvation, and a foundation of life everlasting, a refuge, to be sure, for those still beset by storms and a relief for those in distress and a shelter for those without hope. And, to put it simply once and for all—whosoever does not believe in Him will not live but will die for eternity.⁸⁵²

The last line of the discourse itself may be yet another allusion to the Bible, this time to

John 3:16:

...whosoever believes in him [Jesus] shall not perish but have eternal life.

By means of Thekla's discourse, having presented the attributes of Jesus, heaping one upon another in a kaleidoscopic repetition of the conjunction *kai*, Ps.-Basil issues a strong warning to his readers in regard to their eternal salvation by changing the affirmative of the biblical passage into a reverse image.

In the *Miracles*, Ps.-Basil presents Thekla as a reflection of Christ. She is, he writes, a *χριστοφόρος*, a Christ-bearer (*Mir.* 27). By looking at Thekla, one can see something of what Christ is like. By the fifth century when the *Life & Miracles* was composed, Jesus seemed a somewhat distant Jesus, a bit obscure, a touch removed. This may have been a consequence of the emphasis that the Council of Nicaea put on Christ's divinity—at the expense of His humanity. It was a subtle shift but a significant one and one that gave rise to the cult of the saints. As Peter Brown puts it, “In believing in the resurrection of the dead, Jews and Christians could envision that one day the barriers of the universe would be broken...But the resurrection was unimaginably distant.”⁸⁵³ In the ensuing centuries, the cult of the saints functioned to bring an invisible Savior to the people. They advertised deity. They were His ambassadors, His representatives, His agents. We see this in the *Introduction* to the *Miracles* when Ps.-Basil contrasts *daemones* of darkness and their intent to conceal with the saints and their prophecies.

But it remains to be asked of what sort are the remedies and the predictions of the saints?—Plain, true, straightforward, holy, completely totally worthy of the God who has given them. Indeed there is no other way for the saints to prophesy to us except through the grace of Christ alone. Actually first they themselves experience it and they redistribute it to those who ask...Among these holy saints is the very great martyr Thekla.⁸⁵⁴

It is, writes Ps.-Basil, through the grace of Christ alone that the saints, Thekla included, perform the work that God has given them to do. Sometimes the line between the saint and the Savior became blurred. *Mir.* 28, which witnesses to a dark time for the people in the environs of Seleucia because of pillaging bandits, perhaps most concisely conveys the fifth-century perception of the relationship between the saint and the Lord:

Our troubles are no longer bearable or tolerable; already we are sinking into ruin and total destruction...all everywhere lament for themselves, turning towards the only hope that remains: your intercession [O Thekla] and the help of your Husband and King—Christ.⁸⁵⁵

The two, saint and Savior, are again invoked together in *Mir.* 9 by the godly Menodoros, who “manifested Christ Himself” and was credited with a resurrection miracle. Having fallen into dark times, Menodoros was “dejected, wailing, praying and calling out to her [Thekla] for aid after Christ.”

In a somewhat ambiguous statement, Ps.-Basil, while occupied with assessing the relative superiority of one miracle over another, concludes that neither should be judged as inferior because both are the work of “One Hand, One Intent, One Power” (*Mir.* 6. 14-15). Is it Christ or Thekla here who is being referenced? Given Ps.-Basil’s strong Christological statements in the *Life*, we can be confident that it is Christ’s hand, intent, and power to which he refers. Gregory of Tours spoke to the power of the indwelling Christ when he wrote:

It is better to speak of the *Life* of the Fathers (rather than lives) all the more so since there is a diversity of merits and virtues among them but the one Life [of Jesus] of the body sustains them all in this world. (preface).⁸⁵⁶

Unde manifestum est, melius dici vitam patrum quam vitas,
quia, cum sit diversitas meritorum virtutumque, una tamen
omnes vita corporis alit in mundo. (*Life of the Fathers*)

Χριστοφόρος (a Christ-bearer, one indwelt by Christ) as Thekla is characterized (*Mir.* 27), is an appropriate term for her. In what other ways is Thekla referenced in the *Life & Miracles*? What epithets does Ps.-Basil employ for her and, in turn, what do they reveal about his perception of her?

Thekla was Christ's servant (*Life* 20; *Mir.* 16) and handmaid (*Life* 23; Ex. 21.6; Dt. 15.7), his captive (*Life* 1) and bride (*Life* 7 and 8). Thekla is most frequently referred to as the Martyr. Her next most frequent epithet is that of Virgin; she is also identified as the bride of Christ. She cites her betrothal and union with Christ as her greatest gift (*Life* 25). And Ps.-Basil writes that Thekla's reward is "Christ, [her] King and Bridegroom (*Life* 26). In *Mir.* 28, Ps.-Basil suggests an *imitatio* by Thekla to Christ the King when he writes:

For the Martyr understands how to reward those who during their lives have performed a good deed, but she also understands how to punish the impious and those daring to commit sacrilege, imitating in this—I think—Christ the King...⁸⁵⁷

In *Life* 28, Thekla is addressed as "Virgin, Martyr, and Apostle" while Christ, in beautiful symmetry, is referred to as Thekla's "Bridegroom, King, and Ally" (*Life* 9). Thekla, as Virgin awaits her Bridegroom; as Apostle, she is sent by her King to accomplish His purposes; and as Martyr she is supported by Christ, her Ally whom she calls her "Shield Bearer and Champion" (*Life* 22).

It is this vital, vibrant reciprocal relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and Thekla that provides the foundation for the *Life & Miracles* and infuses it with meaning.

Johnson sees the *Life* as functioning as a foundation legend for Seleucia and the *Miracles* as Ps.-Basil's "attempt to represent a specific vision of Thekla which is carefully constructed throughout the whole of the *Miracles*."⁸⁵⁸ It is important, in analyzing the *Life & Miracles*, to factor in the influence, scope, and import of its biblical references as well as the importance Ps.-Basil places on Christ which, as we have shown, is considerable. The insight gleaned from this survey should, in turn, inform other considerations in regard to the *Life & Miracles* from type of genre to authorial vision to audience and beyond.

One more biblical reference may be applicable here:

Each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.⁸⁵⁹

Conclusion

This survey has provided a comprehensive analysis as to what, in way of biblical reference, Ps.-Basil included in the *Life & Miracles*. It has demonstrated that Ps.-Basil employed biblical motifs, allusions, quotations, and parallels in the *Life & Miracles* and that he drew freely from books of both the Old Testament and the New Testament, namely: Genesis, Exodus, I Samuel, I Kings, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, Jonah, Matthew, Mark, John, Acts, Romans and James. The book of Luke is mentioned in the prologue to the *Life* as one of the models for Ps.-Basil's work. New Testament characters cited in the *Life & Miracles* include John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, John, Mary "the *Theotokos*" (*Mir.* 14), and the protomartyr Stephen; Old Testament characters include Elijah, Elisha, David (only by way of quotation), Daniel and his three companions, Job, Jonah, and Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel. Ps.-Basil presents Christ as God,

the only begotten Son, the Bridegroom, and chiefly as the King and Thekla as Christ's bride, handmaid, and martyr. Ps.-Basil demonstrates a high degree of sophistication in cross-referencing biblical passages, such as the *imitatio Christi* that he advances in *Life* 12 and his discussion of the comparative significance of God's miracles on behalf of Daniel, the three Hebrew children, and Thekla. The results of our survey reveal a far richer and more sophisticated biblical field of reference than scholars have previously attributed to Ps.-Basil.

Ps.-Basil presents a clear Christology, doctrinal creeds, and sophisticated biblical reference and exegesis in the *Life & Miracles*. The fact that these are primarily concentrated in the *Life* must speak to his authorial vision for the work; the *Miracles* must serve a different purpose than does the *Life*.

Johnson argues that Ps.-Basil, by way of paraphrase, reconfigures the *ATH* to create a foundation legend that, in turn, serves as a springboard to the *Miracles* which, in their promotion of Thekla, also serve to promote Seleucia and Ps.-Basil himself.⁸⁶⁰ While I do not entirely reject Johnson's thesis, given the thoughtful theological content of the *Life & Miracles*, the way in which Ps.-Basil has carefully chosen his biblical references and crafted them into his expansion of the *ATH*,⁸⁶¹ the distinctly different tone compared to the *Life* with which he has imbued the *Miracles*—a general air of praise and festivity that relates to triumphalism and *panegyreis*—and his express concern for the spiritual condition of the Christian congregation at Seleucia, I would attribute a less superficial, and more profound intent to the work. At the very least, the *Life* is the story of Thekla's relationship to Christ, her Bridegroom, King, and Helper (as reinforced by biblical reference); while the *Miracles* tell the story of Thekla as Christ's ambassador and her

intercessory work, by the grace of Christ, the One hand, intent and power behind her work, on behalf of Ps.-Basil and the people of Seleucia and its environs.

According to Ps.-Basil, he wrote the *Miracles* specifically so that those who encountered them might be brought to faith:

We have compiled her [Thekla's] miracles...in order that it may not be possible for those who come across them to disbelieve what we have related before, but that they may harvest belief from the miracles... by having [the evidence] close at hand and by examining for themselves the truth of what we have said..⁸⁶²

He carefully chose and crafted his work giving careful consideration as to each miracle's capacity to persuade. Vyronis places the *Miracles* "in a milieu where Christianity is freshly and stridently victorious over paganism."⁸⁶³ The *Life and Miracles* presents to its audience the Church triumphant and invites its readers to join in the celebration. That is why the literary vehicle of *panegyris* through which Ps.-Basil presents the *Miracles* is so fitting.

Notes to Chapter 11

⁷⁹¹ Dagron (1978), 96, and 156-7.

⁷⁹² Dagron (1978), 157 and López-Salvá (1972-3), 246-55.

⁷⁹³ Dagron (1978), 156.

⁷⁹⁴ López-Salvá (1972-3), 254-5.

⁷⁹⁵ Dagron (1978), 156.

⁷⁹⁶ See Johnson (2006), 33, 59, 159, 222-3.

⁷⁹⁷ Johnson (2006), 222. By the sixth century, in what might be described as a rechanneling of religious emotion, the cult of St. Thekla was eclipsed by Mary the Theotokos. Even the site of Thekla's *temenos* became known as Meriamlik which, in the native dialect, meant "House of Mary." The *L&M* as a fifth-century text that mentions Mary only once does not fit into the flow of that development which, in turn, may have implications that speak to the reception of the text.

⁷⁹⁸ Johnson (2006), 222-3. See Chapter 1 on the "Date of the Composition" for more on this topic.

⁷⁹⁹ Johnson (2006), 32 and 222 sees in Ps.-Basil a certain affinity with Gregory of Nazianzus and a valence in his writings that is "clearly Cappadocian" noting, in particular, "a significant lexical correspondence" between Paul's theological defense before the governor Kestillos and portions of Gregory of Nazianzus' three sermons *On Peace* (*Or.* 6, 21, 23; *PG* 35).

⁸⁰⁰ Dagron (1978), 96.

⁸⁰¹ For other discussions for establishing literary dependence see Brodie (2001), 105. Brodie posits three fundamental criteria: 1) external plausibility (accessibility), 2) similarities significant beyond the range of coincidence, such things as theme, motifs, plot, order, linguistic details, and so forth, and 3) intelligible differences. MacDonald (2001), 2-3, suggests six criteria: 1) accessibility, 2) analogy (examples of the same story having been used/accessed by other authors, 2) density (the volume of parallels between the two texts, 4) order (do the two texts share the content in similar sequencing?), 5) distinctive traits (which MacDonald describes as "intertextual flags"), and 6) interpretability (why might the author have chosen to draw from the other text?).

⁸⁰² *Life* 9. 27-8, 34-9.

⁸⁰³ *Life* 12. 62-6.

⁸⁰⁴ *Life* 19. 38-42.

⁸⁰⁵ *Life* 19. 43-51.

⁸⁰⁶ Hypsistios' wife's prayers are compared to those of the biblical Hannah (1 Sam. 1). See Johnson (2006), 158, n. 60. In Dagron's Greek index and in his Greek text (1978), 424 and 326, respectively, she is listed as Ἄννα; however, Dagron, p. 327, n. 4 and also p. 156, recognizes the woman as the OT figure of 1 Sam. 1.

⁸⁰⁷ For more on Hannah in the *Miracles*, see below, the "Theme of Triumph," *Miracle* 14, and Appendix B on Jews in the *Miracles*.

⁸⁰⁸ See *Mir.* 14.

⁸⁰⁹ *Life* 22. 35-7.

⁸¹⁰ *Life* 22. 27-32.

⁸¹¹ *Life* 22: 38-43.

⁸¹² *Life* 22. 43-8.

⁸¹³ Ps.-Basil omits Silas who was present with Paul during this incident.

⁸¹⁴ *Life* 22. 50-2.

⁸¹⁵ *Life* 1.13-17.

⁸¹⁶ See Johnson (2006), 21.

⁸¹⁷ *Mir.* 28. 58-61. See Johnson (2006), 12, for another instance in which the author suggests an *imitatio Christi* by Thekla (*Life* 12).

⁸¹⁸ *Mir.* 44. 30-2. Ps.-Basil's direct biblical reference is accompanied by a casual citation of the passage: "as the God-inspired David somewhere says." Such citations of scripture are found in the Bible itself: in Acts 13:35, "So it is stated elsewhere" and proceeds to quote Ps. 16:10, and Hebrews 5:6, "And he says in another place" which is followed by lines from Ps. 110:4.

⁸¹⁹ The Persian courier system is referred to in Esther 8:10: "Mordecai wrote in the name of King Xerxes, sealed the dispatches with the king's signet ring, and sent them by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king." Also see Herodotus 8.98 (trans. de Sélincourt (1954), 556), for his description of the Persian pony express: "There is nothing in the world which travels faster than the Persian couriers....Nothing stops these couriers from covering their allotted stage in the quickest possible time—neither snow, rain, heat, nor darkness."

⁸²⁰ *Mir.* 1.15-19.

⁸²¹ The term "royal" is associated with heavenly things in *Mir.* 28 that talks about the royal hymn which the angels sing.

⁸²² *Mir.* 45. 8-19.

⁸²³ Johnson (2006), 144.

⁸²⁴ *Ath* 5.7-12.

⁸²⁵ *Life* 11.1-3, 11-12; 12. 1-3, 8-10, 12-16, 18-20.

⁸²⁶ Johnson (2006), 55. Dagron (1978), 217, n. 2, instead, links the phrase "as a lamb before the one shearing it" with Mark 6:34: "L'image est celle de la brebis cherchant son berger." It is not a legitimate parallel, however, and to accept it would be to sacrifice the depth of meaning Ps.-Basil intended.

⁸²⁷ And perhaps to His hearing before the High Priest Caiaphas (Jn. 18) as well.

⁸²⁸ See page 258-9 and note 817, above, for another imitation of Christ by Thekla, one that is explicitly suggested by the author. In both instances, Ps.-Basil tempers his suggestion of an *imitatio* by means of a qualifying phrase. In *Mir.* 28, he writes, "For the Martyr [Thekla] ...imitating in this—I think—Christ the King."

⁸²⁹ Acts 8:31b-35.

⁸³⁰ *Life* 12. 2-3, 8-10.

⁸³¹ *Life* 12. 11-12.

⁸³² Revelation 5-7 includes a scene in Heaven in which Jesus, the Lion of Judah, as the "Lamb looking as it had been slain" began to open the seven seals. "When he opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven for about half an hour." While this passage does not provide a parallel to our discussion, it links silence and the Lamb. On this occasion, others are silent in His presence.

⁸³³ *Life* 12. 8-10.

⁸³⁴ *Ath* 5. 8.

⁸³⁵ *Ath* 5.11.

⁸³⁶ Rom. 8:35-7.

⁸³⁷ *Life* 26. 49-54.

⁸³⁸ For more on this episode, see Johnson (2006), 139 and n. 41, 163-4 and n. 64; Dagron (1978), 323 and n. 17. Johnson following Dagron suggest that Ps.-Basil may have changed the biblical wording and application a bit to avoid charges of plagiarism. This strikes me as a bit of anachronistic overkill.

⁸³⁹ *Life* 26. 65-7.

⁸⁴⁰ See Dagron (1978), 156.

⁸⁴¹ *Mir.* 25. 26-31.

⁸⁴² Dagron (1978), 399, n.6. Johnson (2006), 167, n.70.

⁸⁴³ *Mir.* 36. 10-18.

⁸⁴⁴ See Jacob (1993), 43.

⁸⁴⁵ 1 Cor. 10:1-4.

⁸⁴⁶ Johnson (2006), 165, n. 68 and 229.

⁸⁴⁷ Ps.-Basil was restored to the fellowship of the Church when Basil lifted the excommunication. Basil was notorious for changing his mind and is “remembered chiefly for his vacillating part in the events which preceded the Council of Chalcedon in 451.” (*ODCC* s.v.)

⁸⁴⁸ Johnson (2006), 229.

⁸⁴⁹ Johnson (2006), 228, n.3.

⁸⁵⁰ It is interesting that Jesus is not referred to in the text either as Physician or as Shepherd—common appellations for Him in late antiquity.

⁸⁵¹ *Life* 22. 66-9.

⁸⁵² *Life* 22. 69-73.

⁸⁵³ Brown (1981), 2-3. I follow Brown’s overarching argument in this explanation.

⁸⁵⁴ *Mir.* introduction 75-83.

⁸⁵⁵ *Mir.* 28. 42-8.

⁸⁵⁶ Gregory of Tours, *Life of the Fathers*, trans. K. Rusch in Heffernan (1988), 7, with my elaboration.

⁸⁵⁷ *Mir.* 28. 56-8.

⁸⁵⁸ Johnson (2006), 165-6.

⁸⁵⁹ 1 Cor. 3:10-11.

⁸⁶⁰ Johnson (2006), 66, 167-71, 219.

⁸⁶¹ “Expansion” or “amplification” seem a more accurate words for Ps.-Basil’s adaptation of the *ATH* than “paraphrase” which Johnson uses. “Paraphrase” can imply a shortening rather than a lengthening and “adaptation” is length neutral. The *Life of Thekla*, however, significantly expands or amplifies the *ATH*.

⁸⁶² *Mir.* prologue 10, 15-18, 19-21.

⁸⁶³ Vyronis (1981), 200.

CHAPTER 12:
MIRACLES

Introduction to Thekla's Miracles

In the *Life & Miracles*, Ps.-Basil uses several words for miracles: *σημεία*, *τέρατα*, *ιάματα*, and *θαύματα*. The first two are common to New Testament vocabulary⁸⁶⁴:

You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders (*τέρασι*), and signs (*σημείοις*) that God did through Him among you, as you yourselves know.⁸⁶⁵

And

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders (*τέρατα*) and signs (*σημεία*) were being done by the Apostles.⁸⁶⁶

Johnson postulates a distinct context for the occurrence for each of the four words in Ps.-Basil's miracle vocabulary and, based upon those occurrences, posits three distinct stages in Thekla's career in the *Life & Miracles*: 1) *σημεία* and *τέρατα* are used in reference to her pre-Seleucian days; 2) *ιάματα* is employed in the transitional period after her martyrial contests, and 3) *θαύματα* applies to her wonderworking activity, including that of physical healing in Seleucia.⁸⁶⁷ However appealing such a theory may be, the text does not support it.

According to Johnson, the first two words, *σημεία* and *τέρατα*, tend to occur most often in the *Life*. I find *σημεία* only once in the *Life & Miracles*—not in the *Life*—but in *Mir.* 9 and not in reference to Thekla but rather to Menodoros, a godly man, who

performed signs and wonders, evocative of New Testament miracles, such as raising someone from the dead. As well, *τέρατα* occurs only once, in *Life* 26.25, and is used in relation, not to Thekla, but to the activity of Jesus.⁸⁶⁸ The first part of Johnson's theory, then, must be rejected.

Despite the multiple healings that Thekla performs in the *Miracles* the word *iamata*, the primary designation for miracles in the Asclepian aretalogies,⁸⁶⁹ occurs only three times in the *Life*, all in the closing chapter of the narrative (28) and once in the prologue of the *Miracles*; therefore, the occurrence of the word *ιάματα* in the *Life & Miracles* is distinctly liminal. It is used as the story transitions from miracles performed by Christ on Thekla's behalf to the miracles she performs on behalf of others in Seleucia. In *Life* 28.35, Ps.-Basil provides a distinction between miracles and healings:

But everyone, in every way, received something of what they requested or needed and so they go away singing her praises, giving thanks and blessing [her] since they thought that they had found miracles (*θαύματα*) and healings (*ιάματα*) perhaps better than what was rumoured or expected.

The two words *θαύματα* and *ιάματα* are distinct in the *Life & Miracles* and not synonymous.

The verb "to heal" (*ιάομαι*) occurs six times (mostly in the passive—in the sense that one is healed) in the *Miracles* in regard to the physical healing effected by Thekla (*Mir.* 7, 8, 11, 12, 40 twice, 44, and 46). It appears in *Mir.* 40 in an optative construction—Ps.-Basil's wish for Aretarchos, the sophist who, while having obtained physical healing (*ιάσεως*), attributed its source to be the *daemon* Sarpedon:

Only might you and your soul be healed by the Martyr!
...For the former <your physical healing> we will attribute

to the power of the Martyr, and the latter <your spiritual healing> will count again <as proof> of your ignorance. For the latter is not significant to us, only the former would be <the spiritual healing>.⁸⁷⁰

Johnson has correctly pointed out that, in the *Miracles*, when Thekla performs physical healings, they are described not as *ιάματα* but as *θαύματα*. This suggests that for Ps.-Basil the focus is not on healing *qua* healing but, instead, on the wonder and amazement that the healing evokes. In *Mir.* 44, Ps.-Basil privileges *θαύματα*, when he writes that Thekla's miracles (*θαύματα*) "will be ever welling up, ever bubbling forth, ever abundant, and ever healing (*ιώμενα*)."⁸⁷¹

A cursory examination of the *Life & Miracles* suggests that apart from proper names and epithets, *θαύμα* is one of the most frequently used nouns in the entire text. It is used nine times in the *Life* and innumerable times in the *Miracles*.⁸⁷² Each miracle is a *thauma*. In the *Miracles*' prologue, *θαύματα* is also used in relation to the activity of saints in general. A woman by the name of Dionysia became a *θαύμα* (*Mir.* 46) by her chaste and godly life. Ps.-Basil received the greatest *θαύμα* for the words of his speech although, he confesses, they were not all that amazing *θαυμαστοὶ* (*Mir.* 41). Thekla is a wonderworker (*ἡ θαυμαστός*) (*Mir.* 7).⁸⁷³

Wonder in the *Miracles*

Wonder is the operative word in the *Miracles*. Let us examine some of the ways wonder is evoked in the text. In the adjectival sense, it is used to describe people (Luke the Evangelist (*Life* prologue); Symposios, (*Mir.* 9); a Cypriot man, (*Mir.* 15); Plato (*Mir.* 39), the song of a bird (*Mir.* 26), the beauty of a woman (*Mir.* 33), and the Seleucian

orators (*Mir.* epilogue). Thekla can make small things wonderful *θαυμαστά* (*Mir.* epilogue 11).

People are amazed at the miracles (*Mir.* 1), at Dexianos (*Mir.* 7), at Thekla (*Mir.* 1, 8, 13, 15, 19, and 28) and her strength (*Mir.* 13), at the tenacity of an illness (*Mir.* 11), at evil deeds and the excommunication of Ps.-Basil (*Mir.* 12), at aspects of the festival (*Mir.* 33), and at the consequences of sinful actions (*Mir.* 34). Dionysia was amazed at the sight of Thekla sleeping with her bed partner and herself (*Mir.* 46). Thekla also experiences her own share of amazement. She marvels at the prayers of Hypsistios' wife (*Mir.* 14) and how the grammarian Olympios answered her in Homeric verse (*Mir.* 38).

There is hardly a miracle that does not contain some form of the word *θαύμα* if only in reference to the individual miracle itself. Some miracles contain many variants of the word. The following sentence from *Mir.* 33 is quite amazing:

Let each of you admire (*θαυμαζέτω*) what he wants of the festival, but I think that the miracle (*θαύματος*) and marvel I have enjoyed is more marvellous (*θαυμασιωτέρον*) and sweeter than all.

The Nature of the Miracles

What does the text reveal about miracles themselves? Ps.-Basil compares them to precious gems (*Mir.* 44. 9-10) and the process of searching for them to that of digging for gold (*Mir.* 28.3-5). The number of Thekla's miracles, like snowflakes, is unfathomable (*ἀνεξερεύνητος*) (*Mir.* 10. 31-2). Miracles can be performed on behalf of a group of people or for an individual (*Mir.* 4.54). Miracles vary in degree from one another. Depending on their subject matter, some are accorded more honor (*τιμώτερα*) (*Mir.* 6.27). Miracles can be paradoxical, some more so than others (*παραδοξότερον*) (*Mir.*

14.23). Some are especially great and worthy (*μέγιστόν τε ὄν σφόδρα*) of Thekla (*Mir.*

10.2). Some are accomplished with great rapidity (*τάχος*) (*Mir.* 17.31).

Miracles can also be beguiling:

While I am yet dazzled by the radiance of this miracle, another brilliant miracle – that happened before – stuns me by its beauty and persuades me to move on quickly to it because it is beautiful, because it is attractive and because it is so much more able than the other miracles to charm the listener and to herald more brightly the grace and power of the Martyr. And so let us not delay but rather grant speed to this miracle desiring to spring forward.⁸⁷⁴

(Ἔτι δέ με ὑπὸ τῆς αἴγλης τοῦδε τοῦ θαύματος καταλαμπόμενον, θαῦμα ἕτερον ὑπολάμπαν ποτὲ γεγονὸς τῷ τε κάλλει με καταπλήττεται καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸ πείθει ταχέως μεθίστασθαι ὡς καλόν, ὡς ἐράσμιον, ὡς πολὺ πλεόν τῶν ἄλλων θαυμάτων τόν τε ἀκροατὴν θέλξει δυνάμενον καὶ τὴν τῆς μάρτυρος λαμπρότερον κηρύξαι χάριν καὶ δύναμιν. Μῆτε οὖν ἡμεῖς μελλήσωμεν, καὶ τῷ θάπτον βουλομένων προσηδῆσαι θαύματι χαρισώμεθα τάχος.)

From this passage, we learn that miracles possess varying degrees of radiance.

Miracles can be brilliant, beautiful, and attractive. They have the ability to dazzle, stun, persuade, and charm their audience. Their function in the miracle collection is to be attractive and, thereby, herald the Martyr. Finally, they have the desire to “spring forward”, to be showcased, to perform.

Indeed, Ps.-Basil conceptualizes the miracles as individual members of a chorus

in *Mir.* 37:

Come, then, what we have learned thus far, let us recount in order that our stories may thank us since they also have been deemed worthy of the blessed dance (*χοροστασίας*) of the miracles.⁸⁷⁵

It is as if the miracles are animated. And it seems that a miracle is not automatically included in the blessed chorus just by virtue of it being a miracle. Miracles present themselves for auditions and Ps. Basil makes the selections. Miracles are performed: and the telling of them is their performance. Thekla performs the miracles and, in turn, the miracles perform.

Some, like *Mir.* 34, demand to be included in the performance:

Another miracle presents itself to me hardly falling short of the previous one, but I think even more dreadful, yet nevertheless demanding also to be inscribed among the miracles, so that it may be a message for self-control to those reading this book and to persuade them not <to turn> their eyes towards impious <sights>, nor to profane things, nor things unworthy of the eyes of the martyr.⁸⁷⁶

The miracles vary in character. Some can be dreadful (*φοβερόν*) (*Mir.* 33.66), and others, like the one above, are even more so (*φοβερώτερον*); while still others inspire fear and terror (*φόβη τε καὶ ἔκπληξις*) (*Mir.* 28.79); some miracles, however, are gentle, sweet, and kind as in *Mir.* 35:

So come, now, and move on!—for I must say the same thing again—from the more somber miracles to the brighter ones, from the more severe to the more kindly, so that humbled by fear, we may lift up our spirits and be warmed again by some sweeter and gentler accounts.⁸⁷⁷

An individual miracle can have more than one effect, as in *Mir.* 18:

The cure for the foot also caused a similar cure to blossom forth for her spirit, and so both <cures> resulted from the one miracle.⁸⁷⁸

Reitzenstein has commented that it is the happy belief in the marvellous that sustains the lively manner of writings such as these.⁸⁷⁹ Wonder is the *modus operandi* of the text. It is noteworthy that of the four Gospel writers it is primarily Luke whom the

author invokes as an interlocutor, and Mark, who stress the wonder and astonishment that accompany Jesus' miracles.

Healing in the *Miracles*

While Athanasius' *Vita Antoni* is generally regarded as the prototype for later hagiography, excepting the New Testament itself, Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (22.8) may well be the earliest model for Christian healing miracles. Delehayé cites it as "les premiers <Libelli miraculorum>."⁸⁸⁰ Cures, including ones that involved oneiric revelation, were recorded at Augustine's church at Hippo and read aloud to the congregation in effect as "advertisements of God's power." Augustine wrote that: "we cannot deny that many miracles were wrought to confirm that one grand and health-giving miracle of Christ's ascension to heaven with the flesh in which He rose."⁸⁸¹ Although the individual saints of miracle collections often seem to eclipse God,⁸⁸² as is the case in the *Miracles* of Thekla, the collections ultimately are testimonials to, or advertisements of, Christ, the Ultimate Healer, who energised the healing saints. In the *Myrtle Wood*, Thekla declares that it is God and not she who heals:

I am not the healer but rather God [is], the One who lives in the heights and watches over the humble.⁸⁸³

In *Mir.* 4, Ps.-Basil writes that the Lord "sows saints on the earth in the same way He would assign the world to the finest doctors." While in *Mir.* 24 Thekla is described as the true healer (*ἀλεξήτριον*) of humankind, unlike the saints in other Christian healing collections, she is never described as a physician.⁸⁸⁴ Curiously absent from the *Miracles*, apart from the ministrations and interventions of Thekla herself, is almost any suggestion of medical philanthropy. Despite the many epithets used for Christ in the *Miracles*, Ps.-

Basil does not style Christ as the Great Physician the way other hagiographical authors often do.⁸⁸⁵ Thekla does not appear in visions as a physician, unlike Cosmas and Damian or Cyrus and John.⁸⁸⁶ There is no mention of medical staff at Thekla's *temenos* and there is no indication that any of the *temenos* staff—neither any φύλαξ (guardian), nor πάρεδρος (acolyte), nor member of the γερουσίας τῶν ἱερέων (college of priests)⁸⁸⁷ — fill any medical function.⁸⁸⁸ And, as Dagron notes, at the *temenos* of Thekla: “Il y a aussi des malades, moins que dans les grands sanctuaires à incubation.”⁸⁸⁹ Egeria made no comment as to medical facilities or activities at the *temenos* in her account of her visit there nor did she attribute any medical role to the deaconess Marthana, “a person to whose way of life everyone in the East bears witness,” who was supervisor of the *aputactitae*, or virgins.⁸⁹⁰ There is no more than a hint in the *Miracles* that anyone other than Thekla was involved in providing relief to those seeking healing at her sanctuary.

Thekla's *temenos* is described as a “city” (*Life* 28.5-8) as is the Basiliades of St. Basil in the late fourth century in Cappadocia;⁸⁹¹ but, while his “city” had extensive medical facilities and humanitarian hospices of various kinds, there is no indication in the *Miracles* of hospital or medical facilities at Meriamlik. Also, there is no archaeological or material evidence that testifies to medical facilities (apart from the remains of cisterns which are mentioned in *Mir.* 24, quoted below, as providing healing water). Both the *Life* and the *Miracles* refer to a dispensary at the *temenos* —but not in the normal sense:

[Thekla]—still alive—penetrated and entered the earth—thus it seemed good to God for that earth to divide for her and to split downwards in the spot in which the sacred and holy and liturgical table has been fixed, [a table] placed in a peristyle and a shining-silver circle⁸⁹²; and from there it sent forth springs of remedies (πηγάς ἰαμάτων) for every suffering (παντὸς πάθους) and for every illness (πάση),

as if from some conduit of virginal grace pouring remedies (*ιάματα*) for those who asked or prayed [for help]; thus the place was a public “surgery” (*πάνδημον ιατρείον*) and became established as the shared “mercy-seat” for the whole earth.⁸⁹³

More medical terminology is employed in *Mir.* 25:

But the Martyr, the true healer (*ἀλεξητήριον*) of humankind, having taken pity on the widespread and severe suffering (*πάθος*), opened in her sacred precinct a “dispensary” (*ιατρείον*) and invited all without exception to come to her. By night she directed one of the sufferers (*πασχόντων*) and through him she made it known to all that all those struck by this illness (*πάθει*) should use her bath (*λουτρῶ*). For this bath was the “dispensary” (*ιατρείον*) which was the antidote (*πολέμιον*) to the sickness (*νοσήματι*) of the eye condition from the very start; however, it was reinforced with the energy of the Martyr and <so> it became a most effective cure (*ἄκος*)...the grace of an abundant and most bountiful source. In fact, when all the people stopped lining up when the flows overflowing the cisterns had stopped, the grace of the Martyr did not fail...⁸⁹⁴

And of Thekla, Ps.-Basil also writes,

But the Virgin...brings healing (*ἰωμένη*) to all.⁸⁹⁵

Healing and medicine are not necessarily co-terminous in the *Miracles*. While medical terminology is abundant in the *Miracles*, Thekla prescribes remedies, not medicine. The *Myrtle Wood*, an abbreviation of the Thekla story, tells us that Thekla gathered herbs each Lord’s Day. The herbs, however, were not, as one might expect, used in the preparation of medicines, but simply served as the food that Thekla ate during the week. Her cures are distinctly non-medicinal in nature.

Ps.-Basil deliberately attempts to rouse the interest of his readers as to the nature of Thekla’s cures:

What kind of medication (*φάρμακον*) was used for this therapy? Surely you wish to know this as well! It was nothing expensive (*οὐ πολυτελές*), or complicated (*οὔτε περίεργον*), nor an ingenious invention of the quackery of the Asclepians.⁸⁹⁶

Thekla is distinguished from doctors and the greater medical community by faith healing.

From the *Miracles*, we learn that in Seleucia and its environs, there were doctors (*ιατροί*),⁸⁹⁷ physicians of the school of Asclepius (*Ἀσκληπιάδες*),⁸⁹⁸ Jewish healers,⁸⁹⁹ charlatans (*ἐπαυιδός*),⁹⁰⁰ menders (*ἀκεσταίς*) of bodies and of horses.⁹⁰¹ A Christian epitaph for a namesake of Thekla, discovered at Seleucia and decorated with two crosses, is inscribed “Thekla the Physician” (*ΘΗΚΗ ΘΕΚΛΗC ΕΙΑΤΡΙΝΗC*) and underscores the healing tradition associated with St. Thekla.⁹⁰² Epigraphic evidence attests to a medical presence in the city of Seleucia and its environs but not at the *temenos*.⁹⁰³ However, it was the doctors, as recorded in the account of the *Myrtle Wood*, who considered Thekla a rival and competitor to be eliminated.⁹⁰⁴ Scholars, in general, have perceived and processed Thekla primarily as a healer and the miracle collection itself as belonging to the same genre as other healing miracle collections based largely upon what they see as a tradition of the practice of incubation at her cult center.

Incubation: Pagan versus Christian Ideas

Incubation in its earliest and broadest sense has been described as “the act of going to sleep in a sacred place in hope of obtaining a revelation concerning some problem from a dream sent by the local numen.”⁹⁰⁵ It is a practice of salutiferous sleep. The earliest study of incubation was by Meibom (1659); followed by Deubner who sees Christian incubation as a continuation of pagan practice (1900); Hamilton (1906) who identified both individual and collective incubatory practices; Franz (1960) who

contradicts Deubner; and Festugière (1971) whose compilation of translations of four Christian healing miracle collections, in which he includes the *Miracles*, is well known. The foundational work on incubation, however, is *Los Thaumata de Sophronios* by Fernández Marcos (1975).⁹⁰⁶

As stated, the cult of Thekla has long been associated by scholars with the practice of incubation. López-Salvá provides an extensive examination of the *Miracles* for evidence of incubation.⁹⁰⁷ Patricia Cox Miller cites the cult of St. Thekla as the premier example of incubatory cult in late antiquity:

The most spectacular instance of the Christian appropriation of Asclepius is found in the mid-fifth century in the cult of Saint Thekla in Seleucia...She healed by appearing in dreams to the sick who were sleeping in her church. Proficient in the application of miraculous medicine, Thekla wore the mantle of Asclepius, now in the guise of a female saint...In the figure of Thekla, oneiric aspirations to health lived on.⁹⁰⁸

Compelling, but accurate? Thekla's healing miracles did not occur only in the context of incubation nor was she limited to healing miracles. Festugière speaks more accurately to this in his study of miracle collections. He states that there are two categories: 1) collections of those who are exclusively healers—Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, Artemios, Therapon, and Isaiah, and 2) collections of those who are devoted to various interventions but whose good works are not restricted to healings such as Theodore, Menas, Thekla, and Demetrius. He argues that the features of the collections in the two categories are markedly different.⁹⁰⁹ The *Miracles* can in no way be considered a more “spectacular” instance of Christian incubation than that recorded in the *Thaumata* of Sophronios (about Cyrus and John— a seventy-miracle corpus), or than the *Miracles of*

Artemios, or those of Cosmas and Damian, to name just a few, all of which were written when the Christian practice of incubation was more highly structured and formulaic (keeping in mind as well Festugière's two category distinction).

I depart from the opinions of Miller, Marcos, and López-Salvá⁹¹⁰ as to the *degree* of importance that incubation holds in the *Miracles* and concur with those of Franz, Radermacher, Dagron, and Johnson. While there are indeed elements of incubation in the *Miracles*, the text is not primarily about incubation, or incubation is not the primary form of healing as is the case in many other, later, healing miracle collections. In Radermacher's opinion, Thekla was not limited to the role of *Inkubationsarztin*.⁹¹¹ Before proceeding to an examination of the textual evidence in the *Miracles*, let us briefly look at the practice of incubation itself which can be traced back to Egypt as early as the fifteenth century B.C.

Incubation was a common practice in the ancient world and was referred to by many classical writers.⁹¹² Incubation was linked most closely with heroic/chthonic figures such as Trophonios and Amphiaraos.⁹¹³ Thekla's death has been likened to that of the deified chthonian heroes, especially to the myth of Amphiaraos. Ps.-Basil writes, "Living, she sank down and entered the earth."⁹¹⁴ Chthonian heroes, having once been human and buried in the ground, accessed the earth's two great strengths which are, according to Dawson: "1) that of bestowing health by means of herbs, and 2) that of giving dreams."⁹¹⁵ Euripides refers to this when he writes, "O Lady Earth, sender of black-winged dreams."⁹¹⁶ By sleeping on the ground where the *numen* was thought to have his dwelling, one was believed to come in direct contact with the *dynamis* of the divinity who himself was connected with the earth's strength. In the cult of Amphiaraos, incubants

slept directly on the ground or on the skins of rams or goats that had been sacrificed to serve as a conductive medium.

In classical Greece, incubation is considered to have served either of two goals: mantic or medical.⁹¹⁷ Over time, and by the fifth century B.C. in its association with Asclepius, especially at Epidaurus, incubation for medical purposes became the primary motivation and took the form of receiving medical assistance, while sleeping, through the visitation of a divinity or, in a Christian context, of a saint. Dillon identifies the “full cycle of the Asklepiad ritual” as including 1) abstinence, 2) a ritual bath, 3) payment of an initial consultation fee, 4) sacrifice, 5) incubation, 6) faith, 7) healing, and 8) thanksgiving.⁹¹⁸ Marcos traces an incubatory ritual cycle in the miracle collection of the Christian saints Cyrus and John at their healing center in Menuthis which included prophylactic fasting, fervent prayer, sleeping on mats of reeds, baths, supplication, the recitation of specific psalms during therapy, and finally hymns of thanksgiving.⁹¹⁹ In the *Miracles*, however, there seems to be no definitive incubatory ritual cycle although there is an almost formulaic post-miracle “hymning” of the saint in response to her goodness and assistance. Christian healing saints often required no fee, perhaps to allay suspicion in regard to mercenary motives and even giving them a competitive edge. These Christian healings saints were known as the *ἀνάργυροι* (the moneyless ones). There is no mention of fees in regard to Thekla’s services although, in *Mir.* 24, we learn that grateful pilgrims often donated exotic birds to her bird sanctuary.⁹²⁰

There is always someone who throws and scatters seeds of grain, either barley or vetch, so that these <grains> might serve as feed for the doves resident here or for the other birds as well. For indeed many and variegated are those <birds> living here: swans, cranes, geese, doves, and

indeed now even from Egypt and from Phasis. Pilgrims bring these and dedicate them to the Martyr because they want to or because they have vowed to.⁹²¹

Initially, pagan dream cures were immediate and miraculous in nature; however, by the second century A.D., the cures grew increasingly prescriptive with the gods suggesting regimen, drugs and therapy. Christian *miracula* record both prescriptive and immediate cures. The healings that Thekla performs are primarily immediate in nature. Those that are prescriptive are easily accessed and, thereby, swiftly effected:

Revealing to the sufferers what they ought to do, she did not direct those in need to anything rare or very costly, but rather towards something cheap and located near at hand, with the result that the deliverance was more easily facilitated by the faster access to the prescribed medication.⁹²²

It has been observed that Christianity's extended struggle for supremacy was not fought against the luminary divinities of the Olympian pantheon, but rather Asclepius and the lesser chthonian divinities. This is evident even in the *Life & Miracles* in that, while in the opening four miracles of the text, Thekla quickly vanquishes Zeus, Apollo (in his connection with Sarpedon),⁹²³ Aphrodite, and Athena, there is a sustained yet subtle battle with Asclepius throughout the rest of the text. The pagan healing temples of Asclepius at Epidauros, Kos, and Pergamon and of chthonian divinities were among the last strongholds of paganism with some of their cults persisting well into the seventh century. As has previously been observed, while the Olympians were perceived as untouched by human affairs, aloof, remote, and uncaring, the beneficence and healing power of Asclepius and chthonian divinities secured the allegiance of the people.

It is important, at the outset of the examination of incubation in regard to St. Thekla as revealed in the *Life & Miracles*, to emphasize that the goal of Ps.-Basil in the *Life & Miracles* is to celebrate and exalt the *dynamis* of Thekla; therefore, the *Life & Miracles* is not primarily about healing nor is it primarily a collection of healing miracles although healing is the single, largest type of miracle in the text comprising 46% of the miracle collection.⁹²⁴ More than half of the miracles are non-healing miracles.⁹²⁵ Even though Ps.-Basil's first self-presentation is that of someone who is ill (*Mir.* 12) and though deliverance from illness tops his list of four things to be thankful for, healing is not the centerpiece of his miracle collection. And, although in the closing lines of the *Life*, Ps.-Basil specifically identifies Thekla in her post-disappearance state as a healer and likens saints, in particular St. Thekla, to the doctors God sows on the earth (*Mir.* 4), it is not Thekla *qua* healer who takes center stage in the *Miracles* but rather the Saint and her limitless power. Thekla's ability to heal as recorded in the *Life & Miracles* is but an extension and expression, albeit persuasive and pervasive, of her divinely-imbued power.

It should be noted that not all saints healed and, of those who did, some healed only posthumously.⁹²⁶ In the textual tradition, Thekla is associated with healing during her lifetime as well as posthumously/post-disappearance. Unlike other (and later) Christian miracle collections in which healing is the primary focus, such as the seventh-century *Thaumata of Sophronios* about Saints Cyrus and John and the sixth-century *Acts of Cosmas and Damian*, both of which display similarity in content with the Asclepian *iamata*, in the *Miracles* healing is but an accessory to the narrative; therefore the lack of detail in regard to Thekla's modes of healing and to the therapies she prescribes should not be surprising. Contrary to the long-held position as to the centrality of incubation in

the *Miracles*, nowhere in the text is there any explicit reference to incubation nor is there the specific technological terminology typically associated with the practice (as will be discussed below on “Incubation and Thekla”).

Johnson goes so far as to challenge whether the episodes previously identified as instances of incubation in the *Miracles* can legitimately even be regarded as such and whether the *Miracles* can be even classified as part of that incubatory tradition. Johnson suggests that what we see in the *Life & Miracles* is instead a broad cultural overlay. He sees previous scholars as having emphasized “the similarities of the cultural institutions” and as having de-emphasized the differences between them.⁹²⁷ The nature of incubation suggested in the text appears, according to Dagon, to be more spontaneous and improvisational in nature and less systematized than that presented in the Asclepian *iamata* or in later Christian miracle collections.⁹²⁸

Since the turn of the twentieth century, Deubner’s argument that Christianity merely adopted and assimilated pagan practices has been generally accepted.⁹²⁹ There are, however, scholars who strongly challenge the notion of seamless continuity between classical pagan and Byzantino-Christian traditions and the view that the saints are merely pagan gods and divinities transformed.⁹³⁰ There was not necessarily a linear, evolutionary development. Despite the “strict parallelism” that existed between pagan principle and Christian practice and the “parallel vitality” of the two, Dawson argues that Christian healing differed in explanation.⁹³¹ Franz claims that Christian incubation is not simply a case of old wine in new wine skins. Although the outer form is similar, he argues, both the concept and the context differ. Franz concludes that it would be a foolhardy attempt to equate the two.⁹³² Frend provides the following explanation:

Religious life...was moving along similar paths towards similar ends, but in this encounter Christianity had advantages. First the Christian savior was not just the reality behind the myth, but a historical personage...Christians could claim that Jesus was the true Orpheus...and the true wise man in the Ulysses saga.⁹³³

The healing activity of the chthonic divinities and the Christian saints sprang from different spheres. The power of the chthonic divinities was associated with the earth and, although the saints' remains were encased in the earth, their healing power emanated from heaven. The saints in the *miracula* are presented as representatives of Christ the King and as healing by the power that He grants.

Kee's argument in regard to the centrality of healing in Christianity bears repeating:

...the phenomenon of healing in the gospels and elsewhere in the New Testament is a central factor in primitive Christianity, and was so from the beginning of the movement. It is not a later addendum to the tradition, introduced to make Jesus more appealing to the Hellenistic world, but was a major feature of the Jesus tradition from the outset. Indeed, it is almost certainly a part of the historical core of that tradition...⁹³⁴

Following both the example and the teaching of Christ, Christians, privately and collectively, were actively involved in extending assistance to those in need.

Indeed, those roots reach deeply into Jewish philanthropic tradition.⁹³⁵ Kee speaks to this when he writes:

...the role of Jesus as a healer was by no means an accommodation of an itinerant preacher-prophet to Hellenistic culture, but was in direct continuity with the Old Testament prophetic understanding of what God was going to do in the New Age, for the salvation of his people and for the healing of the nations.⁹³⁶

The paradigms for philanthropy and personal responsibility in the Judeo-Christian ethic and that of the Graeco-Roman world were distinctly different. The former was expressed by “a purely voluntary but fully adequate concern for the poor;”⁹³⁷ while the Graeco-Roman paradigm fashioned acts of benefaction that were irregular, self-exalting, and not necessarily directed to those who were in actual need. Clement of Alexandria, in the early third century, addresses the indifference of the social elite to the conditions around them:

They ignored the widows they saw, but pampered their puppies; they avoided the orphans on the streets, but wasted time in feeding parrots and pet birds.⁹³⁸

In light of new evidence and in regard to parallels between the healing traditions, Horden and Purcell in their major study call for scholarship that will occupy itself with “explaining change rather than postulating survival.”⁹³⁹

The question arises as to why, in the Christian healing centers, certain elements of paganism were rejected while others were retained. The “remarkable” parallelism in religious forms shared by late antique paganism and Christianity, as noted by Peter Brown, should not come as a surprise. According to Wolf, syncretism occurs and should be expected among “first-order concerns: traditional practices related to healing, death, and family, things that speak to common fears and concerns.”⁹⁴⁰ In regard to similarities in the practice of incubation in pagan shrines and Christian sanctuaries, Walton writes, “Who is to say whether the customs are ‘heathen’ or ‘Christian’? They are neither; they are intensely human.”⁹⁴¹ Late antique and early Byzantine Christians ministered to humanity, extending faith healing in the process.

Christian healing activity provides an explanation for the astonishing spread and reception of Christianity in the ancient world and often served as an impetus for

conversion. There were those who were drawn to Christianity by the selfless response of Christians to plague victims during the mid-third century when pagans and even the pagan doctors were leaving the sick behind and fleeing the cities for the safety of the countryside. Christians, however, remained in the cities committed to alleviating the suffering. Countless lives were saved and this selfless expression of concern became a “cornerstone for conversion.”⁹⁴² In the fourth century, Christians such as Eustathius and Basil in the eastern empire claimed further ground by establishing extensive healing centers of their own. In the fifth through the eighth centuries, authors of *miracula* depicted the Christian saints as outperforming the chthonian heroes in regard to healing.

The miraculous healings of the saints echoed those of the pagan gods in outward form. According to Temkin, the battle between holy saints and the healing chthonic heroes was an extension of the underlying tension that existed in late antiquity between the Church Fathers and rational medicine.⁹⁴³

Medical care in late antiquity was comprised of several different branches that variously interacted with one another. Hippocratic (scientific) and pagan temple (sacerdotal) medicine enjoyed a respectful and symbiotic relationship. They were complementary systems whose ideologies were not mutually exclusive. Edelstein and Edelstein describe the two as “friendly allies.”⁹⁴⁴

Christianity was not hostile to Hippocratic medicine.⁹⁴⁵ In fact, Hippocratic medicine played an important role both in the monastic medical care system and in the Christian hospitals that emerged in late antiquity. The biographer of SS. Cosmas and Damian positively notes their knowledge of Galen and Hippocrates.⁹⁴⁶ Arnobius, teacher of Lactantius, boasted that the most excellent of doctors were embracing Christianity.⁹⁴⁷

Professional doctors were numbered among the members of both coenobitic and anchoritic monastic communities. Within these communities, nurses emerged in a professional capacity with their own administrative hierarchy distinct from doctors and volunteers.⁹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, an inherent, underlying tension existed between Hippocratic and monastic medical care systems because Christianity emphasized Christ as the Ultimate Healer (*eg. Cassidorus, Instit. 31.1*).

The monastic medical care system also worked in cooperation with that of Christian faith healing. They were complementary systems that shared the same ideology. Between temple medicine and Christian faith healing, however, there existed virulent antagonism and competition as attested by the *Miracles*. In light of such enmity, the notion of continuity or evolution seems inappropriate. Despite surface similarities between the two systems, those of theurgy and thaumaturgy, there were great differences. Vikan addresses the complexities and connections between the various aspects of late antique Graeco-Roman medicine with this insightful comment:

One's local bishop, town doctor, and neighborhood sorceress were almost certainly at odds...the patient, however, did not indulge in the luxury of subtle differentiations. If need be, he would call on all in one breath.⁹⁴⁹

As Kötting observed, "It was a cure-seeking world."⁹⁵⁰

The saints matched and surpassed the healing powers of Asclepius, Amphiaraos, and other deified heroes particularly in the practice of incubation. The *Miracles* open with Thekla displacing Sarpedon, the chief *daemon* who was thought to occupy the mountain fastness outside of Seleucia. According to Diodoros, Sarpedon, who figures in two of the miracles, was a chthonian hero especially associated with Apollo in

Seleucia.⁹⁵¹ According to Ps.-Basil, Thekla was equal to the fight and he depicted her as a keen and ever-victorious competitor.

Thekla was not alone in battling mountaintop *daemones*. Theodoret, a contemporary of Ps.-Basil, writes of a mountain near Syrian Antioch that “on its very peak there is a precinct of demons much revered in the neighborhood.”⁹⁵² A century later, however, a community of monastics “hymning their Maker” encircled the mountain. Fergus Millar, citing the incident writes, “once again, the geography of rural Christianity had been dictated by the need to offer a deliberate challenge to the pagan cult centers.”⁹⁵³

The clear challenge issued by Christianity to pagan healing is underscored by an inscription at Radafa outside Antioch that is a transformation of the formulaic acclamation to the hero-healer Herakles: “Herakles, the splendidly victorious child of Zeus dwells here: nothing evil shall enter!” The later inscription on the structure’s window lintel, however, reads “Jesus the Nazoreos (sic), the Son of God begotten of Maria. He dwells here; nothing that is evil shall enter!”⁹⁵⁴

Christian faith healing was not a pagan tradition with a Christian veneer. Christians of late antiquity consciously chose to challenge the last strongholds of paganism, the temple healing shrines of the chthonic heroes.⁹⁵⁵ To do so, they established their own healing sanctuaries to displace pagan ones and installed them with relics of healing martyrs.⁹⁵⁶

On the evidence of extant *miracula*, Talbot identifies three periods of intense activity at Christian healing centers: 1) the fifth through the seventh centuries (the period in which the cult of St. Thekla flourished); 2) the mid-ninth through tenth centuries which corresponds to the post-iconoclastic period; and 3) the late thirteenth century which

corresponds to the Byzantine re-occupation of Constantinople. Although, as Talbot notes, this schema could be dismissed as a product of random textual preservation, she connects it, instead, with a response of triumphalism in regard to

crises within the Church and empire: the Great Persecution, followed by the toleration of Christianity, the establishment of an official church, and an explosion of church construction; iconoclasm, followed by the triumph of orthodoxy, the renewed veneration of icons and relics, and the restoration of images; and the Latin capture and looting of Constantinople in 1204, followed by the recovery of the Byzantine capital and the restoration of its despoiled churches.⁹⁵⁷

Caught up in the first wave of triumphal euphoria, Christians in the fifth century designed new structures, *martyria*, where people could continue to seek healing through the ancient practice of incubation but a healing that was effected and empowered by a different source and proclaiming that Christ and the healing He offered was superior. Ward-Perkins warns against “tidy classifications” that attempt to describe the development of *martyria*, classifications that “oversimplify an overly complex picture.”⁹⁵⁸ His argument that the architectural development of the *martyria* was a *revolutionary* movement rather than an *evolutionary* one can be extended to the development of the cults of the healing saints who were thought to occupy the *martyria*. As Leader-Newby writes, “This is one of the most fascinating aspects of late antique culture, the complex issue of subtle change marked by apparent continuity.”⁹⁵⁹

The cults of the saints, several of which involved incubation, developed and grew during the early Byzantine era. People sought healing in Byzantium from Saints Cosmas and Damian⁹⁶⁰ at the Kosmidion, as well as from St. Therapon,⁹⁶¹ and St. Artemios,⁹⁶² from the Stylite saints such as Daniel in the eastern empire, in Alexandria from Saints

Cyrus and John,⁹⁶³ from St. Martin in Gaul,⁹⁶⁴ from St. Menas in Egypt who is closely connected in Egyptian tradition with St. Thekla,⁹⁶⁵ and from St. Thekla at Seleucia, among others. In the seventh century, incubation was also practised in the basilica of St. Isidore on Chios. Incubation is mentioned once in the thirteenth-century *Miracles of the Patriarch Athanasios I of Constantinople*.⁹⁶⁶ Over time, certain saints came to be associated with specific illnesses: St. Thekla with eye conditions; St. Artemios with maladies of the groin; SS. Cyrus and John with insomnia and problems with breast feeding. Ps.-Basil, Sophronios, and Gregory of Tours all received healing from the saints whose miracles they collected and compiled.⁹⁶⁷ Sophronios styles Saints Cosmas and Damian in their incubatory visitations as physicians and the seventh-century author of the *Encomium* of St. Artemios presents him as a doctor making rounds just as in a ξέρον.⁹⁶⁸ In contrast, Thekla is nowhere in the *Life & Miracles* portrayed as a medical professional; instead, Ps.-Basil emphasizes that she appears to the needy in her own shape and form as a young girl.⁹⁶⁹

Incubation and Thekla

In this study I will be examining textual evidence for individual, not collective, incubation at the *temenos* of Thekla.⁹⁷⁰ As already stated, in the *Miracles* there is no explicit mention of the practice of incubation at the *temenos* of Thekla.⁹⁷¹ López-Salvá suggests that since Ps.-Basil's primary purpose was to extol the *dynamis* of Thekla, he chose to spare his readers the technical details of incubation with which his readers were already familiar, inserting instead an authorial comment such as "as was her custom" in an effort to move the story along and his audience to an appreciation of Thekla's intervention.⁹⁷²

The healing miracles that Ps.-Basil records, some more than others, do suggest the practice of incubation for medical purposes within the cult of St. Thekla.⁹⁷³ Outside the scope of this study is the consideration of miracles that may be instances of premonitory or directional incubation. The intent is to address misperceptions/bring clarity to the long-standing and on-going debate as to the place of incubation at Hagia Thekla in regard to healing. According to López-Salvá, *Miracles* 19 and 38 alone are sufficient to show Ps.-Basil's familiarity with the practice of incubation.⁹⁷⁴ She provides a detailed look at the evidence for incubation within the *Miracles*.⁹⁷⁵ And Dagrón provides a brief but helpful overview of typical terms associated with incubation.⁹⁷⁶

In this examination, I shall begin with lexical evidence. The study by Marcos of the *Thaumata* of Cyrus and John is a good base for comparison in identifying instances of incubation in the *Miracles* of Thekla.⁹⁷⁷ He argues that the analysis of technical terminology used in the various *miracula* is the best reflection of the continuation and persistence of the rite.⁹⁷⁸ Among those lexical items, he includes *ἐγκαθεύδειν*, *ἐγκοιμάσθαι*, *ἐγκατακείσθαι*, *κατακλίνεσθαι*. To Marcos' list, I would add *ἐγκατακοιμάσθαι* as used by Herodotus (8.134). The first two, according to Marcos, are practice-specific at Epidaurus and indicate specifically and unequivocally the act of "sleeping in a sacred enclosure."⁹⁷⁹ If the verb appears without the prefix *ἐγ-/kata* but is followed by a prepositional phrase such as *ἐν τῷ μαρτυρίῳ* it then also is indicative of incubatory practice, though the author chooses instead to use the less technical *καθένδω* and variants thereof.⁹⁸⁰

Visitational terms are also significant in incubatory literature (I list the occurrence of each term in the *Miracles* in the footnotes below): *ἐπίσκεψις*;⁹⁸¹ *παριστάνται*;⁹⁸² and

ἐφίστανται.⁹⁸³ *Ἐφίστανται* occurs twenty-three times in the New Testament, and all but three of those occurrences are in the books of Luke and Acts. In the *Miracles*, Thekla appears/makes visitations: *φαίνω* (*Mir.* 14); *ἐνφαίνω* (*Mir.* 17); *ὑποφαίνω* (*Mir.* 11); *ἐπιφαίνω* (*Mir.* 41), *παρραφαίνω* (*Mir.* 19), *ὑπερφαίνω* (*Mir.* 5). In the New Testament, angels, Elijah, and Jesus make appearances.⁹⁸⁴ A vision of Thekla is an *ὄψιν*.⁹⁸⁵ Accessory terms such as *νύκτωρ* often signal incubation.⁹⁸⁶ Ps.-Basil's verb of choice for describing Thekla's appearances is *ἐπιφοιτάω* (and cognates such as *φοιτάζω*).⁹⁸⁷ For Ps.-Basil, *ἐπιφοιτάω* with its sense of habitually visiting and going to and fro perhaps best captures his vision of Thekla's intense engagement with the people in the miracles.

The lexical items that refer to sleeping and that specifically signal the practice of incubation are largely absent from the *Miracles* while the technical terminology in regard to visitation is abundant. Ps.-Basil engineered a subtle but perceptible change of emphasis, one less pagan and more Christian, by suppressing Asclepian elements in his narrative while, at the same time, elaborating the epiphanies of the saint. Many of the visitation terms that Ps.-Basil employs also occur in the New Testament while Asclepian terms for *Tempelschlaf* do not. Ps.-Basil likely distanced his text from the somnial terminology so closely associated with the Asclepian *iamata* while he retained the visitation terms, many with lexical links to Scripture, because they serve to direct attention to Thekla.⁹⁸⁸

Dreams

The second-century *Oneirocritica* by Artemidorus is a treatise about dreams and the practice of incubation. Aristophanes includes a humorous narrative on incubation in *Plutus*.⁹⁸⁹ Visitation dreams, an integral part of incubation, were actively anticipated by

an incubant and exerted a powerful effect on him. Talbot notes that many ancient authors, classical and Christian, expressed the idea that, while sleeping, one's soul was freed from the body and was particularly receptive to para-normal and extraordinary experiences beyond those that one might experience in wakefulness.⁹⁹⁰ While epiphanies of Thekla, as the author insists, are most often true visions and not dreams, Thekla *ἐφίσταται* “stands at the top” or “nearby” *νύκτωρ* (at night).⁹⁹¹ In one instance in which Thekla hurries to the hearth of a wrongdoer to challenge his actions, Ps.-Basil writes that “[Thekla] [like] a bad dream (*ὄναρ*)—as Homer somewhere says—‘stood above his head’.”⁹⁹² Her departures are as dramatic or more so than her appearances:⁹⁹³ after the pattern of Paul, she hastens off to help a Macedonian woman;⁹⁹⁴ she levitates and vanishes (*ἀποπτάσασθαι*) into thin air;⁹⁹⁵ she departs like a dove (*πέλειαι*);⁹⁹⁶ and drives off in the sky in a fiery chariot.⁹⁹⁷ After having experienced an epiphany of Thekla, no wonder people *feel* as if they have been dreaming!⁹⁹⁸

Dreams play an integral role in Christian literary tradition. While there are obvious parallels between Christian and pagan incubatory dreams, both Marcos and López-Salvá stress that we should not overlook the biblical roots in the Christian tradition. Marcos notes that there is abundant bibliographic attestation to dreams in the Old Testament and provides a list of those especially pertinent to our theme.⁹⁹⁹ Genesis 15 with its mysterious dream sequence is often regarded as an instance of incubation. And the account in 1 Samuel 3 of God's calls to Samuel when he was a boy sleeping in the temple has been described as an instance of “involuntary incubation.”¹⁰⁰⁰ Marcos notes also that the Old Testament oneiric tradition carried on in the Gospel of Matthew and in the Acts of the Apostles, thereby creating a favourable climate for the acceptance

of dream therapy and the practice of incubation in Christianity that by the fifth century was widespread in the eastern churches, less so and more sporadically in those of the west, and continues to this day in parts of Spain, Italy, and Greece.¹⁰⁰¹

Cox-Miller identifies several Christian dreamers from late antiquity: Gregory of Nazianzus (whose mother Nonna interpreted a dream), Gregory of Nyssa and his mother Emmelia, Hermas, Perpetua and Jerome. The late-first-century *Shepherd of Hermas* was a respected text of the early Church and was often read from the pulpit. Miller describes it as a “dream-book” and identifies its Shepherd as the central revelatory figure.¹⁰⁰² The third-century *Martyrdom of Perpetua* contains a series of four dreams that she had prior to her martyrial contests. Jerome, the famous biblical translator and commentator in the late fourth century, Miller describes as an “unhappy dreamer” who was tormented by the memory of some of his dreams.¹⁰⁰³ Especially painful was the dream that addressed his penchant for classical literature and in which the dream figures accused him of being a “Ciceronian” rather than a Christian.¹⁰⁰⁴ The two Gregorians, the famous Cappadocian theologians, both had dreams of their siblings who died. Gregory of Nyssa wrote of his sister Macrina and Gregory of Nazianzus of his brother Caesarius.¹⁰⁰⁵ While still pregnant with Makrina, her mother Emmelia dreamed that Makrina’s “secret name” should be Thekla.¹⁰⁰⁶ These few examples indicate that dreams played a normative and culturally acceptable role in the primitive Christian faith.

Ps.-Basil often mentions dreams in the *Miracles*, particularly in the context of distinguishing between reality (ὑπᾶρξ) and dream (ὄναρ) in light of Thekla’s frequent visitations.¹⁰⁰⁷ Most frequently, Ps.-Basil is at great pains to stress that the visitation by Thekla was a reality and not a dream; however, in the case of Alypius (*Mir.* 38) the

dream was a dream but a true one. Cox-Miller identifies two antique categories for dreams: 1) “truth-telling dreams (especially premonitory and predictive)” and 2) those that are insignificant or false.”¹⁰⁰⁸ It is this distinction that Ps.-Basil often makes in the *Miracles*: that what someone sees is in reality (*ὑπᾶρ*) as opposed to the product of oneiric imagination. According to Cox-Miller the Graeco-Romans *saw* dreams rather than *had* them.¹⁰⁰⁹ Cox-Miller writes that they regarded their dreams and dream figures as autonomous and as existing objectively in space and independently of the dreamer rather than as products of the unconscious or subconscious mind.

Cox-Miller remarks on the “paradoxical construction” of “written dreams” as a combination of the ephemeral (the dream) and the permanent (the text).¹⁰¹⁰ Husser suggests that written dreams, in addition to moving the story towards resolution and facilitating dialogue with the divine, also often

form a diptych, the panels of which mirror each other word for word; the scene experienced in the dream will be lived out in the wakeful world, for the dream acts as an initial prophetic element or instruction given to the hero of the story.¹⁰¹¹

This phenomenon is illustrated in the account of the healing of Alypius, a teacher in Seleucia who had fallen seriously ill, and having received no medical help, took up residence in the church of Thekla. This is one of the miracles that more strongly suggests the practice of incubation at the *temenos* of St. Thekla.

[Thekla] paid a visit by night to [Alypius], as is customary for her to do always in the case of those who are ill, showing herself as she really is...She held forth a stone that she happened at that time to be carrying in her hands, which seemed most beautiful and multicoloured...and ordered him to bind it <around> his neck, as <an object> with the power to put the illness to flight and to bestow a

cure...Alypius received it, and while he was still asleep, he seemed to be holding onto it and clasping it very tightly in his hand, as a pledge of life and of health, but upon awakening, he opened his hand and found nothing. And it seemed that he had been deceived and that the dream, in truth, had been only a dream. [Later that day Alypius' son arrives carrying a stone that he had picked up while he was walking to the *temenos* to care for his father. It was the very stone of his father's dream]. And as soon as he stood by his father's bed, his father noticed the stone...and recognized it as the gift of the martyr. And immediately seizing and clutching it, he was at once delivered from the long, severe illness.

What Alypius dreamed in his dream was mirrored in reality. The dream, while not reality, was a true dream and functioned in the incubatory healing of Alypius. The miracle provides additional insights into the incubatory process at the *temenos*. Alypius' son comes each day to provide care for his father. Perhaps that is how the sick were attended in the absence of medical staff. Also note that at the *temenos*, Alypius is lying on a couch (*κλίνη*).¹⁰¹² Thekla provides a stone that is to be used as an amulet to cure sickness. Alypius' was a chronic illness and he was cured immediately.

A final and cautionary observation in regard to the presence of incubatory elements in the text: *Mir.* 32 contains several lexical items and elements regarded as being essential signifiers of incubation yet by context the miracle is definitely not an instance of incubation.

Ailments and Cures in the *Life & Miracles*

Arnobius, a Christian rhetor and apologist of the late third century, persuaded his audience of the superiority of Christ's healing to that of Asclepius because it is "without drama and incantations."¹⁰¹³ Prodomus refers to the "unadorned healing of the Savior."¹⁰¹⁴

Ps.-Basil makes it clear that the remedies that Thekla prescribes are, like those of Christ, also unadorned:

Anyone would be quite amazed at [Thekla] since these things <were accomplished> without any complicated medications (*πολυτρόπου φαρμακείας*). Revealing to the sufferers (*πάσχοντας*) what they ought to do, she did not direct those in need to anything rare (*σπανίων*) or very costly (*πολυτιμήτων*), but rather towards something cheap (*εὐτελών*) and located near at hand, with the result that the deliverance was more easily facilitated by the faster access to the prescribed medication. In addition, her power was demonstrated through these products so ordinary that their benefits are attributed to the prescriber (*προστατούσης*), not to the prescription (*προσταχθέντος*).¹⁰¹⁵

According to Ps.-Basil, the important thing is not the prescription but the power of the Prescriber. Thekla is a divine healer and she deals in *divine* healing. The healing that her suppliants receive is divine. Be that as it may, it should be noted that, nevertheless, it is the doctors of Seleucia who are upset by Thekla's healing success, consider her as a competitor and a threat, and plot her demise.

The ailments that Thekla treats in the *Miracles* include four broken legs, four eye diseases (including blindness), three unspecified illnesses, a case of misaligned vertebrae, kidney problems, scrofula, anthrax, a disfigurement of a woman's face by deleterious drugs, a pregnant woman's discomfort, and an ear infection.¹⁰¹⁶ It is interesting that, in contrast, accounts from the *Miracula* of Patriarch Athanasios from the thirteenth century, another peak time in visits to healing shrines, the most common affliction was possession by evil spirits, in eleven of the thirty-nine cases, seven of which involved women and four, men—while there is no possession by evil spirits recorded in the *Miracles* and only two cases of demonic attack: in the vivid and startling accounts of Dexianos (*Mir.* 7) and

that of Orention (*Mir.* 33). In that same *miracula* collection, the next most frequent illness was urinary problems (6)—none is attested in the *Life & Miracles*—followed by blindness (5). In a survey of ninth- and tenth-century healing accounts, Talbot identified again demonic possession as the most frequent category (33%),¹⁰¹⁷ followed by cases of paralysis (17%) while there are no cases of paralysis in the *Life & Miracles*; and next, cases of blindness and eye ailments (9%) which we have seen is a significant category in the *Life & Miracles* along with that of broken legs. Talbot's studies, on the other hand, show that in the ninth and tenth centuries healing of fractured limbs is rarely attested.¹⁰¹⁸ It seems that different ailments were prominent at different times, apart from eye infirmities which seem to be a constant challenge perhaps, as the author of the *Miracula of Athanasios* explains, because "what is more susceptible than the eyes, whose vision is often disturbed <even only> by a hair getting into them or by dust tossed up from the ground?"¹⁰¹⁹

Broken Legs

All four cases of broken legs in the text were caused by falls. Three of the four breaks resulted from falls from a horse or from mules while the fourth resulted from falling from a broken scaffold. Despite the similarity of causes, Thekla heals the broken legs in various ways.¹⁰²⁰

Leontios, a master in mosaics, was working along with others in a rich man's house in Antioch. When a scaffold collapsed from under the craftsmen, he was the only one to survive but his leg was badly damaged. Unnamed people transported him to Thekla's *temenos*. While he was asleep in the sanctuary, Thekla made a visitation and "stepped with her own foot on the leg that had been hurt and quite forcefully indeed, so

that Leontios, in great pain, suddenly jumped up and stood and then for the first time walked and ran.”¹⁰²¹

Dexianos, a member of the *temenos* staff about whom Thekla cared a great deal, shattered his leg badly when he was thrown from a skittish horse. Thekla healed him “straightway” not with any “complicated medicine” but by prescribing the application of, as implied, the oil from the vigil lamp in her *temenos*.¹⁰²²

Miracle 18 contains the accounts of two women, the Christian Tigriana from Tarsus and the agnostic Aba of Seleucia, both of whom sustained broken legs having fallen from their mules. Tigriana was on her way on pilgrimage to Thekla’s *temenos* when her accident occurred and was more than a little angry at the whole episode even to the point of blaming Thekla for the misadventure:

And the Martyr with no delay whatsoever made a visitation by night; she did not order [Tigriana] to do this or that, nor to use this medicine (*φαρμάκῳ*) or that, but only to rise up from her bed and to walk...¹⁰²³

In this case, no healing assistance but only the word of the Martyr was required, similar to the healing activity of Christ and of Peter who healed in Christ’s name.¹⁰²⁴

A very similar account is found in *Mir.* 33 of the *Thaumata* of Cyrus and John in which a woman by the name of Cosmiana fell from her mule while traveling to their healing sanctuary at Menouthis on a pilgrimage to see the site and its relics. Both Tigriana and Cosmiana traveled on to their respective destinations after their accidents. As we have seen, Tigriana received healing before reaching the *temenos* of Thekla; Cosmiana, however, was not healed until reaching the sanctuary at Menouthis. Both women, prior to receiving healing, expressed anger in regard to their mishaps. Cosmiana

reproached Sts. Cyrus and John saying, “ You are to blame, since you, who bring about good health for others who are infirm, have wrecked good health for me alone.” After receiving a hard slap to her jaw from the saints (perhaps for her cheek!), Cosmiana awoke and found her leg healed.

After her fall, Aba, Tigriana’s contemporary in *Mir.* 18, sought medical assistance from various quarters. Having found no help, finally she was transported to Thekla’s *temenos*. After she offered up many prayers and tears, Thekla prescribed a plaster made from grime to be applied to her foot. It seems that Thekla is not alone in such therapy. “Grime from gymnasium walls” was prescribed by Dioscorides (c. 60) for tumors (*φύματα*).¹⁰²⁵ The grime may also be regarded as symbolic of the state of Aba’s heart, for after the miracle, Aba becomes a Christian: “The cure for the foot also caused a similar cure to blossom forth for her spirit, and so both <cures> resulted from the one miracle.”

Eyes

As we have noted above, eye diseases were prevalent in late antique and Byzantine times. Sophronius, the seventh-century author of the *Thaumata* of Cyrus and John, had an affliction of the eyes that the doctors of Alexandria had been unsuccessful in treating but that Ss. Cyrus and John were able to heal. In his study of Sophronius’ *Thaumata*, Marcos has identified six different eye problems and catalogues those along with references in classical medical journals.¹⁰²⁶ There are various cases in the *Life & Miracles* as well.

Four of the eighteen healing miracles in the text have to do with eyes (*Mir.* 23-6, 37: Pausikakos, a ferry man, suffered from a malady of the eyes that resulted in blindness (*Mir.* 23); a little boy, recently weaned, damaged one of his eyes from excessive crying

(*Mir.* 24); a city-wide ophthalmic plague threatened the people with blindness (*Mir.* 25); a Cypriot man who was blind partook of the healing waters at the *temenos* (*Mir.* 37). Thekla, indeed, came to be especially associated with cures for the eyes. Even today, on the island of Cyprus, Thekla is invoked for eye diseases.¹⁰²⁷ Marcos identifies several specific eye diseases that were treated as saints were often associated with specific diseases. Herodotus writes:

The practice of medicine is so divided among [the Egyptians] that each physician is a healer of one disease and no more. All the country is full of physicians, some of the eye, some of the teeth, some of what pertains to the belly and some of the hidden diseases.¹⁰²⁸

The cures for eye ailments are as diverse as those for broken legs. Scales simply fell from Pausikakos' eyes, after he spent days in the Myrtle Wood crying out to the Martyr, and his sight was restored. The eye plague affecting the residents of Seleucia and its environs was stemmed by the healing waters from the overflowing cisterns at the *temenos* which also provided healing for the blind Cypriot nobleman. On a more dramatic note, when there was need for eye surgery, as in the case of the little boy, a crane from Thekla's bird sanctuary, having been provoked by the playfulness of the child while it was trying to eat, much to everyone's horror, jumped on the boy and struck his injured eye with its beak. There was no need to worry, however; the perfect incision made by the bird's beak resulted in releasing the infection and curing the malady.¹⁰²⁹

The description of the little boy's eye affliction finds parallels in the thirteenth-century *miracula* of the *Oration on the Translation of the Relics of our Holy Father Athanasios, Patriarch of Constantinople*:

From [Hieron] hailed George Kalokyris, whose vision was dimmed and who was deprived of the light which is most precious to all men, since his body's two lamps <his eyes> had gone out.¹⁰³⁰

Despite the span of eight centuries, the description of damage to the eyes is remarkably similar. Another case in the *Miracula of Athanasios* exhibits the same phrasing:

The woman [Eugenia] was deprived of the sweetest light, since both the lamps of her body were extinguished.¹⁰³¹

Compare this with the description by Ps.-Basil in *Mir.* 24 of the little boy whose eye was damaged by excessive crying:

[The little boy's nurse] showed [Thekla] the wound...specifically, the ruined charm of his countenance, so that henceforth his sight, the most lovely handiwork of God in humans, would be only imperfect, half-functional. What is as lovely among our body parts: What is necessary and useful as radiant eyes that both see and shine, possessing and dispensing light equally upon all that is made: It is like the vast sky. If someone were to take away the second light <the moon>, he would do no small damage to the sky itself in regard to beauty, and he would damage the earth, taking away half of the beauty of the sky, and cutting off from the earth half of its light...¹⁰³²

Scrofula

Another interesting cure, one for scrofula, is recorded in *Mir.* 11. Scrofula (*χοιράδες*) was a disease of bumpy swellings in the neck that resembled bumps on the backs of pigs.¹⁰³³ Little Aurelios was suffering from scrofulous tumours in his neck that were threatening to choke him. His grandmother, a pagan, sought help from the *daemon* Sarpedon whose lack of assistance she found most distressing. However, Thekla “arrived on the spot...and immediately revealed the cure:”

O my dear old lady, take some soft wool, and spin some to the measure of the standing height of the child, starting

from the head and ending at the feet, and then having burnt it and mixed the ashes from this together with the medication (*φαρμάκω*)—which she explained to her in turn—place this on the afflicted part of the neck and you will deliver the little boy from this terrible condition (*πάθους*).¹⁰³⁴

Unfortunately, we are not told any details about the “medicine” that was to be mixed with the ashes from the wool. The grandmother seems to have obtained it from a professional doctor:

From what follows, one might be amazed at the tenacity of the condition and the efficacy of the assistance. For when the medicine was applied in the manner the Martyr prescribed, the scrofula withdrew from that part where the medication also was, and went towards another location on the neck, and again when the medicine also was changed to that place, the scrofula too went away to that other place again. And so after that it was just like a chase between hounds and deer, with the one chasing the other fleeing, until the excellent doctor (*ιατρός*), whoever he was, after preparing the medication in a large amount, and (this also at the direction, I think, of the Martyr) he covered the entire neck with it and forced the obstinate scrofula to go down towards the stomach and from there passed away from the bottom.¹⁰³⁵

Thekla involves the grandmother by having her spin the wool to the height of the child. Perhaps there is a hidden significance in the parallel between measuring the boy from top to bottom and the disease being chased from his body, top to bottom? The prescription of burning wool and using the ashes for a plaster is an unusual one. Wool is absorbent, however, and perhaps even its ashes were of a particular nature to facilitate the efficacy of the plaster. I am unfamiliar with any parallels to this particular therapy.¹⁰³⁶

This miracle for the little boy did not take place at the *temenos*. We learn little of the excellent (*βέλτιστος*) doctor, whose name, Ps.-Basil insists, is unimportant, except

that he presumably acted “under the direction” of Thekla, and prepared the medicine in a large amount, and persisted in applying the treatment until the little boy was healed. This is one of few positive comments on the professional medical community in the *Miracles* and is closer in sentiment to *Mir.* 4.34 where Ps.-Basil likens the Lord’s distribution of saints on the earth to that of the finest (*ἀρίστοις*) doctors.¹⁰³⁷ By the thirteenth century, while medical doctors are still mocked for incompetence, they are no longer alone. Disillusionment with faith healing has also set in as expressed in the *Miracula of Patriarch Athanasios*:

Afterwards when the woman arrived in the capital, she spent every day visiting many holy churches and passing through sacred precincts, seeking a cure for so great an affliction. And although she wore herself out running to and visiting many holy sanctuaries and relics, she failed to achieve her goal.¹⁰³⁸

Unspecified Illnesses

There are three unspecified illnesses among the healing miracles. One of these resulted in both spiritual and physical healing. The Christian wife of Hypsistios, “an enemy of Christ and a friend of *daemones*, prayed that he be delivered from his unbelieving ways (*Mir.* 14). In response to her earnest prayers, Thekla “wrapped him in a severe sickness [to] weaken the baseness and harshness of his spirit.” His behaviour grew intolerable, to the point that

...every doctor and every house servant had given up on him, and [when] his wife had become worn out indeed by prolonged lack of sleep from bedding down on the floor and by the bad humour of the patient—for the term of a lengthy illness often produces ill humor—and the hope from every quarter was of death.¹⁰³⁹

After Hypsistios was worn down from the long illness, Thekla appeared to him, had him recite a theological creed, breathed into him “some <kernel> of salvation,” and he was healed, body and spirit. Paradoxically, the sickness had been the cure.

Augustine speaks of the double miracle of the healing of body and soul:

Take God as your physician. Beg Him to give you health and salvation (*salus*), and He Himself will be your salvation (*salus*). Do not pray for external health merely, but for that health, that is salvation which is Himself...Obviously, though, you must await your healing with patience. What remedies He will apply to cure you, He knows; what surgery, what cauterizations, He knows. You brought your sickness on yourself by sinning; He has come not merely to coddle you, but to cut and burn.¹⁰⁴⁰

The “cut and burn” policy described by Augustine and employed by Thekla on Hypsistios does not seem to have been required in either case of two literary men, Alypios (*Mir.* 38) and Iskasios (*Mir.* 39) who, like Hypsistios, also suffered unspecified but lengthy illnesses. Both men sought help from Thekla; Alypios, in her sanctuary at Seleucia, and Isokasios, at her sanctuary in Aigai. Both men received healing. For Isokasios’ unspecified illness, Thekla prescribed an unspecified cure. For Alypios, however, Thekla prepared a stone to be used as an amulet to ward off his sickness. The amulet here, according to López-Salvá, testifies to the deeply-rooted idea connecting the divine force with portable objects.¹⁰⁴¹ Vikan writes that the medico-amuletic items from early Byzantine days, “reveal a world thoroughly committed to supernatural healing, and one wherein, for the sake of health, Christianity and sorcery had been forced into open partnership.”¹⁰⁴²

Discomfort from Pregnancy

Bassiane, a hostage given by the Ketis [Isaurians] in a covenant pledge of peace and who spent her time at Thekla's sanctuary in prayers and hymns, was uncomfortably pregnant due to the intense summer heat—even to the point of wanting to take her own life (*Mir.* 19). Thekla appeared at night in the nick of time to halt Bassiane's headlong rush to plunge into a cistern.¹⁰⁴³ After rescuing her, Thekla, by means of her finger,¹⁰⁴⁴ then anointed Bassiane with water first on her forehead and then on either shoulder, in effect, making the sign of the cross, before departing “like the Zephyr.” As a result, Bassiane became as cool “as if she were in springtime in forested and breeze-swept Daphne”¹⁰⁴⁵ while all those around her continued to swelter in the heat.¹⁰⁴⁶

It is interesting that Bassiane's pregnancy is all but veiled in the narrative, only being mentioned out of necessity a good way into the account. Birth was banned from pagan sanctuaries. Pausanias (2.27.6) writes of the construction of a building at Epidaurus *outside* the temple grounds dedicated to the gravely ill and women who were about to give birth or who just had. Christians aimed at relieving the distress of, and providing for the care of, parturient women, as we learn in this moving passage from the *vita* of St. John the Almsgiver. St. John was from Cyprus and his father was Epiphanius. His *vita* was written for common people by Leontius in the seventh century.

Some destitute women overcome with hunger but lately risen from child-bed were obliged to hasten to receive help from the distributors while they were still in the grip of abdominal pains, deadly pale and suffering grievously. When the wondrous man [St. John the Almsgiver] was told of this, he built seven lying-in hospitals in different parts of the city, ordered forty beds to be kept ready in each and arranged that every woman should rest quietly in these for

seven full days after her confinement and then receive the third of a nomisma and go home.¹⁰⁴⁷

It is with the pregnant Bassiane that a gentle aspect of Thekla's character is displayed. While Thekla is described in this miracle as "the Oh So Gentle One," she employed harsher measures, more like those of Cyrus and John, and Cosmas and Damian, to effect some of the other healing miracles in the collection.

Violent Cures

We have already seen above that Thekla vigorously stomped on Leontios' broken leg to cure it and that she had the crane jump on the little boy piercing his eye with its beak to provide relief. A similar case is recorded in an inscription at Epidauros (*IG* iv. 952 1.1345) in which a patient suffering with gout was freed from the disease when a goose bit him on the foot. *Mir.* 23 of the *Thaumata* of Cyrus and John relates that when an angry camel-keeper hit a sick person at the sanctuary, the blow released flies that had been trapped in the suppliant's head and freed him from the malady. Another violent cure is that which the author experienced in regard to his painful ear infection (*Mir.* 41). Thekla appeared and gave Ps.-Basil's ear such a shake that the rolling away of the infection from the ear canal is likened to the stone being rolled away from Jesus' tomb. Pretty powerful measures.

Deleterious Drugs

The word *φάρμακον* is used frequently in the *Miracles* to describe the remedies that Thekla prescribes. Pharmacology and cosmetics had strong links in ancient times. Included among Thekla's remedies was the soap sold at her *temenos*. To Kalliste, whose face had been destroyed by a deleterious drug *φάρμακον*, Thekla recommended that she

moisten the soap with wine and wash her face with it.¹⁰⁴⁸ Through Kalliste's obedience, the damage was reversed, Kalliste's beauty restored, and her husband was snatched from the arms of another woman. (*Mir.* 42).¹⁰⁴⁹ In a metaphorical sense, the moral filth of Kalliste's husband is revealed as more ugly than her disfigurement. Metaphorically, he is also "washed."

Miscellaneous Illnesses

We have left unaddressed the author's bout with anthrax (*Mir.* 12), the healing for Dexianos' slipped vertebrae (*Mir.* 7), and the kidney disease of Aretarchos (*Mir.* 40). We have already analysed the anthrax miracle in our chapter on Christ and Scripture in the *Life & Miracles*. To that analysis, I would add here that anthrax was a condition of the skin with painful eruptions.¹⁰⁵⁰ The author's case was so advanced that he faced amputation. Augustine provides a picture of the horrors of surgery in late antiquity.

How rare is the patient who has undergone the knife or fire without being bound, while the patient bound willingly is rarer still! In many cases the patient's entire body is tied down, so that even his tongue is barely left free, while he resists and screams that he would rather die than be cured in this way. This is not what those who tie the patient down want or what the patient who is struggling wants, but what the art itself requires. Yet the mind of the healer is not troubled by the uproar patients make as they feel the pain, nor is his hand still.¹⁰⁵¹

Ps.-Basil gladly endured the stinging wasps of his dream rather than undergoing the surgeon's knife.

The last two miracles, the one for Dexianos' vertebrae and the one for Aretarchos' kidney problems, were effected by applying the oil of the vigil lamp that burned continually at Thekla's *temenos*. The wax (*κηρωτή*) of candles and the oil of lamps,

according to Kötting, were the most common healing agents in Christian miracle collections.¹⁰⁵² Evelyne Patlagean regards the oil from lamps as essential to the maintenance of a saint's cult and sees it as having the added benefit of being a renewable resource.¹⁰⁵³ Talbot's research of early Byzantine posthumous healing miracles indicates that approximately 85% were effected by "some kind of contact with or proximity to the saint's relics or substances associated with the relics." Forty percent of divine healings that Talbot has tabulated were accomplished by the anointing or consumption of a "substance that had come into contact with the relics or was closely associated with the coffin." (In the case of Thekla, according to the author, there was no coffin. There was instead the hole into which she descended that later was marked by the peristyle table). Talbot states that "by far the most common such substance was oil from the lamp that normally hung above a saint's coffin and burned continuously."¹⁰⁵⁴

Talbot also notes that many of the miracles that were accomplished a distance from the shrine or *temenos* were done so by oil from the lamp, *myron* (a perfumed oil that flowed from saints' coffins), or holy water brought to the invalid's home transported often in *ampullae*.¹⁰⁵⁵ This most likely was the case with Aretarchos (*Mir.* 40) who was suffering from kidney disease. Thekla advised him that that "the most effective cure... would be nothing other than the night oil of the light that always illuminates her precinct." In that Aretarchos, unlike the other invalids in the *Miracles*, put in a request for that which Thekla prescribed suggests that he may have been convalescing at a distance from the *temenos*. In *Mir.* 7, on the other hand, for Dexianos, who was part of the *temenos* staff and whose vertebrae had been displaced in a traumatic encounter with a

jealous *daemon* (in the privy/ἀφεδρών!), the scented (μυρωθέντι) oil “which always fed the vigil light in her own precinct and the holy altar” was close at hand.

The *Parabalanoi*

At the outset of this chapter, we noted that, apart from the ministrations of Thekla herself, there is little indication of medical philanthropy in the *Miracles*. Thus far in this examination, other than Thekla, we have noted only one person who might possibly be attending to the needs of the invalids—a girl carrying a basin of water. There were suppliants at the *temenos* in search of healing. How were they transported to Hagia Thekla and who looked after their needs? In the case of Alypius (*Mir.* 38), every afternoon his son Olympios would “go to his father, to see and to care (θεραπέυων) for him and do all the things that are appropriate for a son to do <for his father> and for a father to receive from his son.” Presumably, Olympios would also have transported his father to the *temenos*. In the *Myrtle Wood*, the sequel to the *Miracles*, a crippled daughter of a noble Isaurian family was transported to the *temenos* upon a litter carried by two servants.¹⁰⁵⁶ But what of others who were ill?

Leontios, the master mosaicist who badly fractured his leg falling from a scaffold while working in Antioch, arrived at the martyrion “using the hands and feet of others.”¹⁰⁵⁷ And, in the case of Aba, whose leg also was fractured, Ps.-Basil writes that she was transported (ἀνεχομίσθη) to the sanctuary.¹⁰⁵⁸ These small bits of information may perhaps be more significant than they appear at first glance.

There is a little-known eastern tradition of care-giving that appeared in the early fourth century but flourished within the early Byzantine church among both the Chalcedonian and Monophysite persuasions in the sixth and seventh centuries: that of

urban laymen and, in some cases, women committed to assisting primarily the indigent sick.¹⁰⁵⁹ Judge describes them as an “urban church-related association.”¹⁰⁶⁰ They have also been described as “a semi-monastic society of devout Christians.”¹⁰⁶¹ Fengren regards them as a “third order between the clergy and the laity” that performed “philanthropic and liturgical functions,” ascetic in nature but disconnected from both the anchoritic and cenobitic traditions.¹⁰⁶² Initially, they were primarily involved in transporting the sick, taking them to baths, and feeding and clothing them. These caregiving Christians risked their lives, often by night, and even during plagues, searching alleyways to seek out the urban sick and transport them to *nosokomeia* and also to Christian healing sanctuaries such as the Church of SS. Cyrus and John. The liturgical functions of these orders included, according to Fengren, “reading Scripture, chanting, praying, and participating in funerals, vigils, and processions.”¹⁰⁶³ There were three distinct groups of these caregivers: 1) the *parabalani* (risk takers) who rose from the ranks of the Alexandrian poor and functioned under the direction of the patriarch¹⁰⁶⁴, 2) Anatolian and Egyptian urban ascetics called the *spoudaioi* (the eager ones) who came from all different social classes, and 3) their Egyptian counterparts, the *philoponoι* (lovers of labour). In Sophronius’ *Thaumata*, *philoponoι* are described in a specific context, as the convalescent sick at the sanctuary of Cyrus and John who help those more sick than themselves at the sanctuary.¹⁰⁶⁵ That they are some type of an order is indicated in *Mir.* 5 of the *Thaumata*, when reference is made to the “chief of the *φιλοπονείων*.” On the other hand, the *parabalani* grew into a powerful guild-like organization whose membership was capped at five hundred by Theodosius II in 416.

Perhaps those unnamed people in the text who provided transport to the *temenos* for both Leontius and Aba and for others like them issued from the ranks of the *spoudaioi*.

Aspects of Healing at Hagia Thekla

A Compendium of Healing Terminology in the Miracles

In the *Miracles*, people are either well (ὀδώννυμι) or not (ἀρρῶννυμι). Thekla offers aid (βοήθεια) and healing (ἰασις). She prescribes (προσταχθέντος) medicine (φάρμακον) and therapy (θερᾶπεία) plus an occasional cure (ἄκος) or two. She releases (ἀπαλλάσσω, λύω, διαλύω) people from sickness (νόσος) and specific diseases (παθός), thereby restoring them to health (ὑγία). A significant number of the words that refer to health and sickness in the *Miracles* is shared lexically with those in the New Testament and those words predominantly occur in the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts.

In the *Miracles*, Ps.-Basil employs the word παθός when referring to a specific disease such as scrofula or anthrax.¹⁰⁶⁶ Actual “pain” is rarely mentioned and the text never makes reference to women’s pain. The word ὀδύνη which can refer to both physical and emotional pain is used only four times in the text in reference to three individuals:¹⁰⁶⁷ Aretarchos’ pain from his kidney ailment is described as excessive (ἄγαν) and extreme (ὑπερβολήν); Alypius suffers emotional pain; Ps.-Basil’s pain, in the anthrax narrative (*Mir.* 12), however, is described as terrible (χαλεπήν) and unrelenting (ἀπαρηγόρητον). During the dream sequence of the same miracle, Ps.-Basil was attacked by stinging wasps and by Thekla’s intervention, was delivered from those “fierce pains” ἀγρίων πόνων. Πονός, in reference to physical pain, appears only here in

the entire text.¹⁰⁶⁸ Within the Hippocratic corpus, Helen King identifies *όδύνη* as sharp, piercing, concentrated pain and as differentiated from *πονός* which she notes as describing dull, long-term pain in the texts.¹⁰⁶⁹ Ps.-Basil's use of the term *όδύνη* aligns with King's findings but his one use of the word *πονός* does not. The *suffering* aspect of pain is underscored by Ps.-Basil's frequent use of the word *παθός* in the *Miracles* while actual physical pain is not except, as we have seen, in the cases of three individuals one of whom is Ps.-Basil himself, in *Mir.* 12, and it is his pain that is described most vividly.

Typology of Illness: Chronic vs. Acute

Certain illnesses may have been more suitably treated by one branch of medicine than another. Hippocratic medicine was well suited to address acute disease while temple medicine offered a more satisfactory explanation for chronic illness. The chronically ill, upon having exhausted the expertise of the Hippocratics, may have turned to temple medicine for assistance. In the ancient world, people died more frequently from sudden disasters than from lingering illness.¹⁰⁷⁰ Chronic illness, in an age without systemized long-term health care, presented a particular challenge.¹⁰⁷¹

A common *topos* in Graeco-Roman literature, inscriptions, and saints' *vitae* is the doctors being at a loss as to what to do.¹⁰⁷² Ps.-Basil frequently uses this *topos* in the *Miracles*.

The condition had been variously treated by the skill of the doctors, yet despite all of this they were defeated by the malignancy of the condition. Thereupon "the best and finest Sarpedon" ...was solicited.. [but to no avail].¹⁰⁷³

And in the meantime, [the doctors] were using the available medications...but as this evil was stronger than their skill and remedies...they decided to amputate.¹⁰⁷⁴

And the doctors were full of embarrassment and perplexity as they were defeated by the ailment and now also afflicted themselves by the same [illness].¹⁰⁷⁵

Of the eighteen cases in the *Miracles*, six are acute: four broken or crushed legs, anthrax, and an ear infection. The remaining sixty-six percent of the cases are chronic illnesses.

Place of Healing

Of the eighteen healing miracles that we have identified, ten are performed within the *temenos* of Thekla—either in the sanctuary, the courtyard, the Myrtle Wood, or at an unspecified location on site. One miracle is performed in Thekla's sanctuary at Aigai. Three explicitly happen at the home of the invalid. Two more implicitly do. Two miracles occur outdoors, presumably somewhere other than the *temenos*. More than half of healing miracles occur at the *temenos*.

Supplication

Explicit supplication is made either for oneself or on behalf of another in eight of the eighteen healing miracles.¹⁰⁷⁶ Five of the eight supplicants are women seeking healing for themselves, for children under their care, or for a husband.¹⁰⁷⁷ No man offers supplication for anyone but himself. Nor do women offer supplication for one another. Supplication is implied or can be assumed in six of the other miracles.¹⁰⁷⁸ The text is silent in regard to supplication in two of the miracles.¹⁰⁷⁹ In two of the miracles done on behalf of unbelievers there is no indication of supplication.¹⁰⁸⁰ Forty-five per cent of the miracles explicitly involve supplication and in another forty-four percent supplication can reasonably be assumed. Supplication plays a significant role in the healing miracles in the text.

Possible Personnel

As discussed above in the section above on *parabalanoi*, there is little indication of caregivers at Hagia Thekla apart from the possibility of *spoudaioi* (the eager ones), a lay order of caregivers. López-Salvá, in reference to *Mir.* 29, attributes to the *parthenoi* at Thekla's *temenos* "actividad caritativa." She writes, "Se ocupaban de los enfermos del templos."¹⁰⁸¹ These observations are merely extrapolations, however. In *Mir.* 19.28-9, after Thekla thwarts the suicide attempt of the Isaurian hostage Bassiane at the *temenos*, she summons (*παρακαλοῦσαν*) a girl who accompanied her as an attendant (*κόρην, ὡς ἂν τινα παιδίσκην αὐτῇ παρομαρτοῦσαν*) to bring her a basin (*λεκάνην*) that she was carrying and that was full of water. It is interesting that Thekla's attendant is specifically identified as a *κόρη* (twice) rather than as one of the *parthenoi* who reside at the *temenos*. Ps.-Basil presents Thekla as a *κόρη* (*Mir.* 14.32-4) but the term occurs nowhere else in the *Miracles*. *Παιδίσκη* occurs only one other time in the *Miracles* (*Mir.* 3.2) in reference to Aphrodite whom Thekla ousted from the area as easily as one would dismiss a servant; it occurs four times in the *Life*.¹⁰⁸² *Παιδίσκαι* and *κόραι* occur as distinct from each other in the *Life* (10.7-13):

For when it was now day and the ray[s] [of the sun] were beginning to shine, all the young girls and slave-girls (*αἱ κόραι πᾶσαι καὶ παιδίσκαι*) of Thekla, who kept watch over the maid (*κόρη*) herself, were milling around the bed-chamber, [assuming] that their mistress (*δεσποίνης*) was going to arise momentarily and require of them the usual services, such as is the custom of a mistress (*δεσποίνης*) to require and of handmaids (*θεραπεινίδων*) to administer. But when the sun was already high above the earth, and a shout was nowhere heard from Thekla, making the usual arrangements for the young girls (*ταῖς κόραις*), the maidservants (*παιδισκῶν*) were now saying to themselves and to one another...

Thekla's handmaids (*θεραπεινίδων*) seem to be comprised of both young girls and slave-girls (*αἱ κόραι πᾶσαι καὶ παιδίσκαι*). What is the distinction between the two? Could it be that the *κόραι* are younger than the *παιδίσκαι*? Or, perhaps, the *κόραι* are free-born and the *παιδίσκαι* are not? At any rate, the word *παιδίσκη*, used to describe the young girl who attends Thekla at her *temenos*, is not a technical term. The *κόρη* accompanying Thekla in *Mir.* 14 is attending her *as* would a *παιδίσκη*. It cannot be argued or construed from this miracle that the young girl was serving at the *temenos* in a medical capacity.

Demographics in Regard to Healing

Gender

In the *Miracles*, seventeen individuals receive healing: eleven men, four women, two young boys, and no girls.¹⁰⁸³ Over eighty-one percent of those who received healing were male. Helen King notes that, in the Asclepian *iamata* at Epidauros, the ratio of men to women is 33:13. She cites Dean-Jones' study of case histories in the Hippocratic *Epidemics* that yield a ratio of 2:1. King suggests that perhaps most women, when ill, "consulted neither the temple nor the Hippocratic healer" and treated themselves instead.¹⁰⁸⁴ This may well be the case because in many of the miracles not related to healing in the text, women's concerns are met: illiteracy, difficult marriages, stolen goods, emotional comfort.

Religious Persuasion

Of the individuals who received healing in the *Miracles*, four were explicitly not Christians: Hypsytios, Aba, Isokasios, and Aretarchos.¹⁰⁸⁵ The first two converted to Christianity, receiving both physical and spiritual healing. Isokasios and Aba came to the

temenos in search of healing even though they were unbelievers. Information is not given as to the spiritual persuasion of five of the recipients of healing. Forty-seven percent of the healing miracles were performed for those who were explicitly Christians.

Geographic Representation

Those who experienced a miracle of healing were from relatively nearby cities. Some of the recipients were presently, or had been, *temenos* staff. Among other places represented by the invalids are neighbouring cities Aigai, Claudiopolis, Tarsus, Seleucia, Olba, Cyprus, and Erinopolis while for some the place of origin is unspecified.

Time of Miracle

Certain temporal expressions are numbered among the fundamental elements of incubation which, according to Marcos, include two pivotal moments: the moment of the epiphany and the moment of the healing. He identifies dawn, high noon (because it can be seen by all), and midnight among the “horas mágicas.”¹⁰⁸⁶ Several of the miracles simply have *νύκτωρ*, *ἐφίσταται νύκτωρ*, or *νυκτός οὔσης* without any further elaboration or, in others, night or day is simply implied by the context.¹⁰⁸⁷

Only two of the healing miracles display the more dramatic temporal formulas more closely connected with incubation and prevalent in other healing miracle collections.¹⁰⁸⁸ One instance is in the miracle concerning Hypsistios which is special because, as noted above, he received both spiritual and physical healing.

It was high noon and the sun was riding the middle of the sky when the Martyr approached the sick man.¹⁰⁸⁹

And the other instance occurs in *Mir.* 12, the author’s anthrax narrative.

It was still night, half-way between the decision and the amputation itself. Having just fallen asleep at the breaking

of dawn when the night is still giving up its turn and the day is beginning, when it seems the two are mixed together, darkness with light and light with darkness...Thekla entered...And as the day now appeared and was beginning to give light, I was delivered from those pains and sufferings....¹⁰⁹⁰

Six of the healing miracles are performed at night; night is implied by context in two of the miracles; one occurs as night turns to day; in two, day is implied; and two explicitly occur during the day, one of which is at high noon. The time is unspecified in five miracles. The healing miracles, then, occur primarily at night.

Duration of the Miracle

Marcos notes in the *Thaumata* that at the sanctuary of Cyrus and John, immediate healing is the exception and that most healings are effected in three days' time.¹⁰⁹¹ In the *Miracles*, however, apart from three cases, upon Thekla's visitation or upon application of her therapy, all the healings took place immediately. The first case is that of the eye epidemic for which the antidote was the water from a healing spring at the *temenos*.

The result was that in three or four days in total, the sickness remained <only> upon quite a small number, and they failed to obtain the general cure that was being supplied, I think, due to their unbelief—*ἀπιστίας*—or, alternatively due to other vices in their lives...¹⁰⁹²

The two other cases where healing is delayed are the two miracles in which the invalids also receive salvation. As to Hypsistios (*Mir.* 14), “the enemy of Christ and friend of *daemones*,” Thekla “wrapped him in a severe sickness that weakened the baseness and harshness of his spirit.” The “lengthiness” of his illness is referenced twice. When she appears to Hypsistios she tells him that she has come so that she may rid him from “both unbelief—*ἀπιστίας*—and sickness.”

The last case is that of the pagan Aba whose leg was badly wounded when she fell from her mule. Having given up on other avenues of healing, Aba went to Thekla's sanctuary as a suppliant.

Not even three whole days had passed when [Aba] on her own two feet walking, descended, no longer needing a helper...Better still is that she became a Christian as a result of this miracle...The cure for the foot also caused a similar cure to blossom forth in her spirit, and so both cures resulted from the one miracle.¹⁰⁹³

Miracles in which the unbeliever is not converted were effected immediately by Thekla as were the ones for believers. This indicates two things in particular: 1) the unusual religious tolerance in the text, that unbelievers who would not convert, rather than being punished or denied healing as is often the case in other healing miracle collections in which proselytism by violence or torture frequently appears¹⁰⁹⁴, instead received immediate healing and 2) that Thekla, or Christ in Thekla, recognized the condition of the suppliant's heart and if it were malleable, time was given for the salvific work to take place. In St. Paul's Damascus Road experience, he remained blind for three days before Ananias arrived and prayed for both his salvation and healing.¹⁰⁹⁵ In the *Thaumata*, according to Marcos, Cyrus and John effect their healings most frequently in three days time.¹⁰⁹⁶

And the Award Goes to...

The nominees for best incubation narrative in the category of healing are *Miracles* 12, 17, 18, 19, and 38. López-Salvá suggests that *Miracles* 19 and 38 are sufficient in themselves to demonstrate that Ps.-Basil was familiar with the practice of incubation.¹⁰⁹⁷ To be considered for this prestigious award, individual miracles were rated as to the

presence of essential structural elements connected with incubation such as sleeping in the sanctuary, supplication, the three-day *topos*, conversion, dream sequences, lexical items denoting the visitation of the saint, the “doctors-are-at-a-loss” *topos*, “magic hours,” non-medicinal therapies, and the reference to a specific illness. Based on the highest number of incubatory elements in any one miracle, the award goes to both *Miracles* 17 and 38.

The award for most dramatic screenplay goes to *Mir.* 12, the anthrax narrative, and for best actor goes to the author, Ps.-Basil, for his performance in *Mir.* 12.

Conclusion

Many of the essential elements of incubation are evident in the healing miracles of the text, though incubation is never directly mentioned. Collective healing may occur during the annual night vigil of Thekla’s panegyris. Many of the healings occur at night at the *temenos* for suppliants who receive immediate healing after a visitation by Thekla.

The *Miracles* differ from incubatory texts in several ways. The preparatory rites for incubation as recorded in the Asclepian *iamata* and in Christian healing collections are largely missing from the text and are only implied in that people prayed, wept tears, and sang. Thekla appears to and heals some people without even being asked. Although the conversion of unbelievers is encouraged, healing is extended regardless of their responses (with the exception of the city-wide ophthalmic epidemic). The violence regularly employed in other healing texts is miniscule in the *Miracles*. The magical moments of epiphanies so strikingly described elsewhere are apparent only in two of the miracles. Instead of the formulaic terminology associated with the practice of incubation, more simple words are employed. In describing Thekla’s visitations, however, Ps.-Basil

does use language consonant with incubatory texts. My explanation is that Ps.-Basil deliberately shifts emphasis by suppressing expressions common to Asclepian *iamata* in regard to the practice of incubation while retaining the terminology in regard to epiphanies of the healer. He does this because his intent is not to present a text on healing but one that promotes the *dynamis* of Thekla. When compared to the *Thaumata*, the difference is obvious. Marcos writes about the contribution of the *Thaumata* to the history of medicine:

Si exceptuamos los tratados médicos de los compiladores de Hipócrates y Galeno, pocos documentos aportarán más datos sobre la praxis medicinal de la época bizantina.¹⁰⁹⁸

A similar conclusion could never be made in regard to the *Miracles* of Thekla.

That several of the non-healing miracles in the collection are incubatory in nature—for purposes of warning or directing, etc.—and for the most part are more dramatic instances than those of healing, demonstrates that healing is not Ps.-Basil's the primary focus.

Healing plays a significant role in the *Miracles* but its inclusion is for the purpose of evoking awe and amazement for Thekla. That this is the primary intent of Ps.-Basil is underscored by the frequency (over one hundred fifty times) that the word *thauma* and its cognates are used in the text.

Notes to Chapter 12

- ⁸⁶⁴ See Johnson (2006), 198, n.92 for a comprehensive list of references to “signs and wonders” in the NT.
- ⁸⁶⁵ Acts 2:22.
- ⁸⁶⁶ Acts 22:43.
- ⁸⁶⁷ Johnson (2006), 200.
- ⁸⁶⁸ The word *τερατευμάτων* occurs in the prologue of the *Miracles* in reference to “Pythian fantasies.”
- ⁸⁶⁹ In the NT, the word *ιάματα* occurs only in 1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30, in the phrase “gifts of healing.”
- ⁸⁷⁰ *Mir.* 40. 29-33. *Ίάσεως* occurs also in *Mir.* 25.3.
- ⁸⁷¹ In the NT, *ιάομαι* occurs twenty-eight times, seventeen of which occur in the books of Luke and Acts.
- ⁸⁷² In the NT, *θαύμα* occurs only once, in Rev. 17.6. The verb *θαυμάζω*, however, is used forty-six times, mostly in the *Gospels* and *Acts*, eighteen of those are contained in the books of Luke and Acts. The adjectives *θαυμάσιος* and *θαυμαστός* also each occur once.
- ⁸⁷³ A cursory survey suggests that the following verbs are used in the *L&M* in the context of the miracle-working of Thekla: *θαυματουργέω* (to work wonders); *εργάζομαι* (to produce an effect); *επιτελέω* (to accomplish); *ῥέζω* (to do, accomplish, make); *διαπράσσω* (to accomplish); *δίδωμι* (to grant); *ποιέω* (to make, produce); *ἐνεργέω* (to operate, execute). The first two are used most frequently and in almost equal distribution followed by *επιτελέω* used half as often and, finally, by the remaining verbs, with one occurrence of each.
- ⁸⁷⁴ *Mir.* 13.31-7.
- ⁸⁷⁵ *Mir.* 37.9-11.
- ⁸⁷⁶ *Mir.* 34.1-6.
- ⁸⁷⁷ *Mir.* 35.43-7.
- ⁸⁷⁸ *Mir.* 18.49-51.
- ⁸⁷⁹ Reitzenstein ([1906] 1963), 15.
- ⁸⁸⁰ See Dillon (1994), 258, who cites Delehaye (1910), 427-34. Augustine is clear that it was necessary to record the miracles for the specific purpose of public recitation for the information of the general public that faith in Christ might be produced.
- ⁸⁸¹ August. *De civ.* 22.8. Trans. *NPNF* Series 1, Vol. 2, 484. *Nam facta esse multa miracula, quae attestarentur illi uni grandi salubrique miraculo, quae Christus in coelum cum carne in qua resurrexit, ascendit, negare non possumus.*
- ⁸⁸² Dawson (1977), 246.
- ⁸⁸³ *Myrtle Wood* 143.
- ⁸⁸⁴ See Dawes and Baynes (1977), 145-6, 182-3.
- ⁸⁸⁵ See Dawes and Baynes (1977), 183, in which the author refers to “Christ our God, the true master-physician.”
- ⁸⁸⁶ Cosmas and Damian, *Mir.* 17 in Festugière (1971); Cyrus and John, *Mir.* 33 in Marcos (1975).
- ⁸⁸⁷ For discussion of *temenos* staff see Dagron (1978), 126, n. 7. Dagron understands the administration of the “mi-monastique, mi-ecclesiastique” institution at Hagia Thekla as having been administered by the *πάρεδροι* with no superior. For *πάρεδρος*, see *Mir.* 7.5 and 21; 9.44; 22.8; 32.10 and 22; for *φύλαξ*, see *Mir.* 7.6; 16.20; 32.10; for *γερονσίας τῶν ἱερέων*, see *Mir.* 7.4; and a variant, in *Mir.* 41.27.
- ⁸⁸⁸ This is confirmed by Dagron (1978), 104.

⁸⁸⁹ Dagron (1978), 77 and n. 3. Dagron remarks that, when considering the sanctuary of Cosmas and Damian, “on a l’impression d’un véritable entassement.” There is a ministry of healing going on at Hagia Thekla but the difference between it and the other centers is, in part, one of degree.

⁸⁹⁰ Egeria, *Iitin.* 23.3.

⁸⁹¹ Basil refers to his philanthropic institution in *Ep.* 94 (*PG* 32.488bc). Sozomen refers to it by name in *HE* 6.34 (*PG* 67.1397a).

⁸⁹² Dagron translates this as “a table constructed at the centre of a circular peristyle, brilliant with silver.” *Life* 28.10-11. Dagron, (1978), 280-1.

⁸⁹³ *Life* 28.11-14.

⁸⁹⁴ *Mir.* 25.15-21 and 26-30.

⁸⁹⁵ *Mir.* 40.25.

⁸⁹⁶ *Mir.* 18.38-40.

⁸⁹⁷ For *ἰατρός*, see *Mir.* 4.34; 11.10 and 46; 12.4, 9 and 35; 14.26; 23.6; 24.42; 25.12; 38.4.

⁸⁹⁸ *Mir.* 11.7; 18.40: “an ingenious invention of the quackery of the Asclepians.”

⁸⁹⁹ *Mir.* 18.29.

⁹⁰⁰ *Mir.* 18.29. The word *ἐπωδή/ἐπαιοδή* could mean a “song” or “poetry” but often meant “a magic spell” and was used in a pejorative sense as in the *Life & Miracles* but it could also refer to healing in a neutral context. See Remus (1982), 144-5 and accompanying notes.

⁹⁰¹ *Mir.* 25.7 and 20.28, respectively

⁹⁰² CIG. iv. 9209, 454. *Θήκη Θέκλης ειατρίνης*.

⁹⁰³ See Dagron (1978), 127, n. 1.

⁹⁰⁴ See Dagron (1978), 106-7, n. 4, for reference to the account of the medical practioner Gessios of Petra, the pagan *ἰατροσοφιστής*, who was dismissive of the idea that healing by the saints originated in the divine (*Mir.* 30 of the *Miracles* of Cyrus and John, Marcos (1975), 302-6). Also see Montserrat (2005), 239-40:

He mocked the martyrs Cyrus and John, saying that they cured people’s illnesses through medical knowledge (*ἐκ τέχνης ἰατρικῆς*) rather than through some divine and most high power. For when he learned about the remedies they prescribed for the sick...he maintained that they came from the teachings of the doctors: he said that one remedy was Hippocratic, while another was in other medical writers, and he called something else Galenic, announcing that it was found in such-and-such a passage. He remembered that another remedy was in Democritus, and he said he recognised clearly the chapter-heading, and the place where it was. (*Mir.* 30 Cyrus and John, *PG* 87.3.3516).

⁹⁰⁵ Gil (1969), 356.

⁹⁰⁶ Meibom (1659); Deubner (1900); Hamilton (1906); Franz (1960); Festugière (1971).

⁹⁰⁶ Marcos (1975).

⁹⁰⁷ López-Salvá (1972-3), 270-281.

⁹⁰⁸ Cox-Miller, (1994), 117. Contrary to Cox-Miller, López-Salvá (1972-3), 286, argues that “los verdaderos sucesores de Asclepio fueron Cosme y Damián, cuyo santuario en Egas (Aigai) alcanzó gran prestigio y fue muy visitado por peregrinos.” See also Delehayé (1933), 165ff.

⁹⁰⁹ Festugière (1971) 7.

⁹¹⁰ López-Salvá (1972-3), 280 acknowledges that the *Miracles* do not pretend to be a collection of incubation miracles but that *Mir.* 19 and 38 are indicative of Ps.-Basil’s familiarity with the practice.

⁹¹¹ López-Salvá (1972-3), 317, and Radermacher (1916), 125.

⁹¹² For example, see Ar. *Plut.* 653-8, 742f; Artem. 1.2; Macrobius, *Commentary of the Dream of Scipio* 1.3.2; Verg. *Aen.* 7.81f when Latinus receives oneiric instructions from Faunus; Eur. *IT* 1261; Herod. 2.141, 4.172, 8.134; Iambl. *Myst.* 3.3; Plaut. *Curc.* 260; Paus. 2.27.3, 5.14.10.

⁹¹³ The incubation function of the cult of Trophonios was primarily mantic while that of Amphiaraos was both mantic and medical. For Amphiaraos and his *ιατρομαντεῖον* at Oropos, see Hamilton (1906), 80ff and Papageorgiou (1975), 35-38. Hamilton (1906), 82, writes that at Oropos men and women incubants were separated: men slept to the east of the altar while women slept to the west. She also notes that those who received healing threw coins into a fountain as a form of thanksgiving.

⁹¹⁴ *Life* 28.11. See Dawson (1977), 170.

⁹¹⁵ Dawson (1977), 61.

⁹¹⁶ Eur. *Hec.* 1.70 in Shafton (1995), 407.

⁹¹⁷ See Papageorgiou (1975), 35 who identifies Apollo as the god of both mantic and medical arts. He also notes that Hippocrates considered medicine and divination as twin sisters.

⁹¹⁸ Dillon (1994), 255.

⁹¹⁹ See Marcos (1975), 34-9 and *Mir.* 7, 36, 53, and 68.

⁹²⁰ For more on bird sanctuaries in the ancient world, see Robert (1971), 81-105.

⁹²¹ *Mir.* 24.22-8.

⁹²² *Mir.* 8.6-11.

⁹²³ For discussion on Sarpedon/Sarpedonios, see note 469, above. As noted there, Ps.-Basil refers to Sarpedon in *Life* 27 and *Miracles* 1, 11, 18, and 40. See Dagron (1978), 85-89, Johnson (2006), 123-125, López-Salvá (1972-3), 260-2, and Parke (1995) 194-6.

⁹²⁴ Honey (2006a).

⁹²⁵ It should be noted here, however, that even the Asclepian *iamata* contain miracles that have nothing to do with healing.

⁹²⁶ For documentation on non-healing saints and those who healed posthumously from the eighth to tenth centuries, see Talbot (2002), 153-73, esp. Appendix 1, 169f.

⁹²⁷ Johnson (2006), 173. In note 3, he picks up on Cox-Miller's use of the word "guise" in the quote we have provided above in regard to the centrality of incubation in the cult of St. Thekla. He writes that the word "guise" is "precisely the metaphor which obscures the complex relationship between form and content in religious literature from this period."

⁹²⁸ Dagron (1978), 103.

⁹²⁹ Deubner (1900), chapter 4.

⁹³⁰ See Trombley (1993-4); Gregory (1986), 232ff.

⁹³¹ Dawson (1977), 166f.

⁹³² Franz (1960), 441.

⁹³³ Frend (1965), 306 and n. 25 directs the reader to Clem. Al. *Protr.* 1.1-3.

⁹³⁴ Kee (1986), 128.

⁹³⁵ Those roots reach deeply into Jewish philanthropic tradition and the service of the synagogue to the poor and the sick. This consideration is outside the scope of our study nor does it provide a prototype for the late antique hospital, although care was extended to travelers who fell ill while in attendance at Jewish festivals.

⁹³⁶ Kee (1986), 129.

⁹³⁷ Ulhorn as cited by Countryman (1980), 3.

⁹³⁸ Clem. Al. *Paid.* 3.4.

⁹³⁹ Horden and Purcell (2000), 624.

⁹⁴⁰ Wolf, as cited by Gregory (1986), 241ff.

⁹⁴¹ Walton (1894), 76.

- ⁹⁴² Risse (1999), 80.
- ⁹⁴³ Temkin (1991), 170.
- ⁹⁴⁴ Edelstein and Edelstein (1998), 139.
- ⁹⁴⁵ See Amundsen (1982), 326-50 and Nutton (1984), 5.
- ⁹⁴⁶ *Vita Cosmae et Damiani*, *Ana. Boll.* 1 (1882) sect. 4.
- ⁹⁴⁷ Arnobius, *Adv. gentes* 2.5.
- ⁹⁴⁸ For a list of appointed positions see, Crislip, (2002), 29ff; Crislip (2005), 14-18.
- ⁹⁴⁹ Vikan (1984), 86.
- ⁹⁵⁰ Kötting (1950), 316.
- ⁹⁵¹ Diod. Sic. 32.10.2. For an extended discussion on Sarpedon/Sarpedonios, see note 469 (and page 139) in which I note that Ps.-Basil refers to Sarpedon in *Life* 27 and *Miracles* 1, 11, 18, and 40. See also Dagron (1978), 85-89, Johnson (2006), 123-125, López-Salvá (1972-3), 260-2, and Parke (1995) 194-6.
- ⁹⁵² Theodoret, *HR* 4.1.13.
- ⁹⁵³ Millar (1993), 225f.
- ⁹⁵⁴ *PAES* III B, no. 1151 = *IGLS* 424.
- ⁹⁵⁵ Dawson (1977), 166-7.
- ⁹⁵⁶ The Athenian Asklepeion is thought to have been conscripted as a Christian healing center beginning in the fifth century in connection with the apostle and saint Andrew. See Creaghan and Raubitschek (1947), 29. For a list of martyria that rivaled or displaced pagan shrines, see R. MacMullen (1997), 227, n. 66.
- St. Gregory the Great addressed this in his letter to Abbot Miletus:
- Do not destroy the pagan temples but instead sprinkle them with holy water, set up altars in them, and place relics there. In the places where it has been the pagan custom to offer sacrifices to their diabolical idols, allow them to celebrate Christian festivals instead, in another form, on the same date... We cannot wipe the whole past from these savage souls all at once. A man does not climb a mountain in great bounds, but by taking slow steady steps. (Letter 601 to Miletus)
- ⁹⁵⁷ Talbot (2002), 168.
- ⁹⁵⁸ Ward-Perkins (1966), 31.
- ⁹⁵⁹ Leader-Newby (2004), 6.
- ⁹⁶⁰ For Cosmas and Damian, see Hamilton (1906), 119-27. Cosmas and Damian met with martyrdom in the third century at Aigai in Cilicia.
- ⁹⁶¹ For St. Therapon, see Hamilton (1906), 179-134. The *Encomium* of St. Therapon was written in the early seventh century. Therapon was a Cyprian monk who later became a bishop.
- ⁹⁶² The Vita of St. Artemios (c. 660) by an anonymous author is a seventy-five-miracle corpus edited by A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus in *Varia Sacra Graeca*, St. Petersburg (1909), 1-79. Artemios specialized in maladies of the groin.
- ⁹⁶³ For Cyrus and John, in addition to Marcos (1975), see Hamilton (1906), 143-58.
- ⁹⁶⁴ It is interesting that St. Martin himself received a visitation from Thekla, Agnes and Mary. See Sulpicius Severus *Dial.* ii. 13, *PL* 20.210. For St. Martin and healing see, Rouselle (1990) and Rouselle (1976). See also Hamilton (1906), 161-3.
- ⁹⁶⁵ For St. Menas, see Davis (2001), *passim*.
- ⁹⁶⁶ Talbot (1983), 79ff.

⁹⁶⁷ Ps.-Basil was delivered from anthrax by St. Thekla; Sophronios was delivered from a serious eye condition by SS. Cyrus and John; and Gregory of Tours received healing many times from St. Martin from such ailments as dysentery, toothache, stomachache, and an embarrassing case of stuttering. (*VM* 2.1, 2; 4.1, 2).

⁹⁶⁸ Cosmas and Damian, *Mir.* 17; Artemios *Mir.* 6.

⁹⁶⁹ *Mir.* 14.30-41.

⁹⁷⁰ López-Salvá (1972-3), 283, sees evidence for collective incubation in the two miracles that concern Thekla's annual *panegyris*: *Mir.* 26 and 33.

⁹⁷¹ On its absence from the text, see Delehay (1925), 52; López-Salvá (1972-3), 271.

⁹⁷² Such authorial comments by Ps.-Basil refer to that which is "customary" for someone or some group to do and are expressed by the words *νόμος*, *ἔθος*, *συνήθες*, *εἰκός*. See, for example, *Mir.* 9.80; 11.15 and 20 (contrasting Thekla's customary pity for those who are suffering to Sarpedon's customary trickery and lack of compassion); 12.37 (customary practice of doctors to consult with one another); and 38.12 (the account of Alypius which we will discuss below). Of the approximately sixteen of these comments, six apply to Thekla and only one of the six pertains to healing. The data do not support López-Salvá's suggestion that explicit details in regard to incubation absent from the text are in some way signaled to its informed audience by the phrase "as was her custom."

⁹⁷³ *Mir.* 12, 18, 19, 24, 25, 32, 38, 39, and 40. Some of the non-healing miracles that display elements of incubation include *Mir.* 17, 19, 29, 32, 43, and 46. Dagron and I differ as to which category certain miracles should be assigned. A more exact criterion to determine instances of incubation is required.

⁹⁷⁴ López-Salvá (1972-3), 280.

⁹⁷⁵ See López-Salvá (1972-3), 270-281.

⁹⁷⁶ Dagron (1978), 103.

⁹⁷⁷ See, in particular, Marcos (1975), 27-40. For technical terminology, see Marcos (1975), 27, 34, 62-3.

⁹⁷⁸ I heartily concur with Marcos (1975) that philology is essential to an examination of texts. Strangely, however, the miracle in our text that contains the highest frequency of incubatory terms and individual incubatory elements, *Mir.* 32, by context cannot be interpreted as a case of incubation but simply as an incident that occurred at Thekla's *temenos* during the night (as I discuss in the next section on "Dreams").

⁹⁷⁹ Marcos (1975), 34.

⁹⁸⁰ See *Mir.* 12.19, 25, 59, and 94; 17.36; 33.36; 46.3.

⁹⁸¹ *Mir.* 12.39 (in NT only occurs as a verb *ἐπισκεπτομαι*).

⁹⁸² *Mir.* 30.22.

⁹⁸³ *Mir.* 12.95; 18.9; 30.18 and 31; 34.28; 35.15; 41.18.

⁹⁸⁴ Angels in Matt. 1:20, 2:13 and 19; Elijah in Luke 9:8; Jesus in Mark 16:9.

⁹⁸⁵ *Mir.* 7.27; 11.36; 12.32, 34, 54, 65, and 89; 29.35, 40, and 42; 31.8 and 16; 33.39 and 49; 34.36.

⁹⁸⁶ *Mir.* 7.23; 18.9; 25.17; 30.31; 38.12 and 36; 41.18 and 29. See Marcos (1975), 34.

⁹⁸⁷ *Mir.* introduction 84 and 95; 1.6; 7.23; 9.47; 10.41; 11.23; 17.38; 21.23; 22.7-8; 27.32; 38.11. Unlike many other of Ps.-Basil's lexical choices, the word *φοιτάζω* does not occur in the NT. Johnson stresses the sense of "haunting" connected to *ἐπιφοιτάω* which Ps.-Basil so often uses to describe an epiphany of Thekla. See Johnson (2006), 13, 121-3, 147, 150.

⁹⁸⁸ I owe this insight to Dr. Haijo Westra.

⁹⁸⁹ *Ar. Plut.* 659-738.

⁹⁹⁰ For citations of both Christian and classical allusions to dreaming, see Talbot (1983), 139.

⁹⁹¹ *Mir.* 18.9; 41.18.

⁹⁹² *Mir.* 35.13-14. Also, Hom. *Il.* 10. 496: *κακὸν γὰρ ὄναρ κεφαλῆφιν ἐπέστη*.

⁹⁹³ Ps.-Basil viewed Thekla's absence as equally as significant as her presence (*Mir.* 41.32): *τό γε ἀποβησόμενον πάλιν εὐδηλον ἦν.*

⁹⁹⁴ *Mir.* 12.100-1.

⁹⁹⁵ *Mir.* 46.13.

⁹⁹⁶ *Mir.* 11.40-1. In his depiction of Thekla as "a dove," Ps.-Basil may be linking her role in this instance with that of the prophetic priestesses at Dodona who were also called (*πέλειαι*) while, in the next miracle, he links her to Paul by means of the Macedonian connection.

⁹⁹⁷ *Mir.* 26.10-14.

⁹⁹⁸ Not only do the *Miracles* record Thekla's visitations, Evag. Schol. (2000), *Hist. Eccl.* 8, gives the account of the Emperor Zeno's vision of Thekla during which she promised that his empire would be restored, after which he marched his army towards Constantinople and defeated his enemy Basiliscus. Out of thanksgiving, Zeno dedicated a church at the *temenos* and "beautified it with many and Imperial sacred gifts."

⁹⁹⁹ See Marcos (1975), 24, n. 6 and 25, n. 7. Also see López-Salvá (1972-3), 271.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Husser (1999), 188, refers to Oppenheim's 1956 claim of unintentional incubation. See Oppenheim ([1956] 2008), 187-9. Oppenheim (188) states, "As a special case must be regarded dreams seen by priests who sleep in the sanctuary but who neither provoke nor expect such experiences." He cites the experience of the biblical prophet Samuel (I Samuel 3:1ff) as an example.

¹⁰⁰¹ See Marcos (1975), 25, n. 7 and 26. For dreams and visions in the NT, Marcos highly recommends the "magnífico libro" by Lindblom (1968), 25-114. For a modern account of Christian incubation see the study by Vázquez de Parga *et al.* (1948-1949).

¹⁰⁰² The Shepherd interacts with Hermas in chapters 31 through 81. According to Dr. Haijo Westra, the dream became a structural element of a much favored allegorical genre in the Middle Ages, the so-called "vision literature."

¹⁰⁰³ Cox-Miller (1994), 205.

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Jer. Ep.* 22.30.3-5. In later years, Jerome (*Ep.* 70) accommodated the use of classical texts within a Christian context.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Gr. Nyss. *Macr.*; for Caesarius, see *De rebus suis* 2.1.1.165-229.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Gr. Nyss. *Macr.* 2.21-35/ (*PG* 46.961B).

¹⁰⁰⁷ See *Mir.* 14.32; 18.19; 29.40; 31. For the distinction between ὑπᾶρ and ὄνᾶρ, see Dagron (1978), 105.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Cox-Miller (1994), 206.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Cox-Miller (1994), 217.

¹⁰¹⁰ Cox-Miller (1994), 231.

¹⁰¹¹ Husser (1999), 103.

¹⁰¹² Alypius lies on a couch (*κλίνη*) 38.53 at the *temenos*; but the pregnant Bassiane has a bed (*κοίτη*) there. Two women devotees of Thekla are "bedpartners" and share a bed (*κοίτη*) at the *temenos* (*Mir.* 48.8)

¹⁰¹³ Arn. *Adv. nat.* 7.1.63-5 (*CSEL* 4 (1875) 43-6).

¹⁰¹⁴ Prodomos, *Ep.* 6 (*PG* 133).

¹⁰¹⁵ *Mir.* 8.6-14.

¹⁰¹⁶ For broken legs, see *Mir.* 8 and 17, and two incidents in 18; for eye ailments, see *Mir.* 23, 24, 25, and 37; unspecified illnesses are mentioned in *Mir.* 14, 38, and 39; for slipped vertebrae, see *Mir.* 7; for kidneys, see *Mir.* 40; for scrofula, see *Mir.* 11; for anthrax, see *Mir.* 12; for disfigured face, see *Mir.* 42; for pregnancy, see *Mir.* 19; and for ear infection, see *Mir.* 41.

¹⁰¹⁷ Demonic possession is certainly a significant occurrence in the Gospels as well.

¹⁰¹⁸ For the results of Talbot's research, see Talbot (1983), 17; and for ninth and tenth centuries, see Talbot (2002), 158.

¹⁰¹⁹ Talbot (1983), 88-9.

¹⁰²⁰ In the *Miracles*, there is one case of unresolved injury (*Mir.* 10). A workman trying to deface a holy inscription at the *temenos* fell from his ladder and crushed his feet. He was "healed" spiritually but we can only assume that he received physical healing as well. The addition of this injury increases the incidence of broken bones in this miracle collection.

¹⁰²¹ *Mir.* 17.39-42.

¹⁰²² *Mir.* 8.

¹⁰²³ *Mir.* 18.11-12.

¹⁰²⁴ See Matt. 8:5-13; 9:1-7; Acts 3:6-8; 9:32-4.

¹⁰²⁵ *De materia medica.* 1.30. See Riddle (1993), 110.

¹⁰²⁶ Marcos (1975), 108-9.

¹⁰²⁷ Dagron (1978), 391, n. 1.

¹⁰²⁸ Herod. 2.84.

¹⁰²⁹ *Mir.* 24.

¹⁰³⁰ *Miracula* 30, translation by Talbot (1983), 81.

¹⁰³¹ *Miracula* 38, translation by Talbot (1983), 89

¹⁰³² *Mir.* 24.10-20.

¹⁰³³ For scrofula, see Marcos (1975), 110. A case of scrofula is recorded in the *Thaumata* of Cyrus and John in *Mir.* 1.58. In that case, the prescription for the disease was to mix the sacred wax from candles with bread and to apply it as a plaster. According to Foss (2002), 142 and n. 72, a perfumed oil emanated from the tomb of Niketas the Patrician near the Black Sea that was thought to cure both scrofula and blindness.

¹⁰³⁴ *Mir.* 25-30.

¹⁰³⁵ *Mir.* 11.37-45.

¹⁰³⁶ There was a practice of burning pieces of saint's clothing and inhaling the fumes, however. For the practice, see Talbot (1983), 19 and n. 32.

¹⁰³⁷ Also departing from the ubiquitous classical *topos* in regard to the inability of doctors, is a passage from the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus:

Honor physicians for their services for the Lord created them: for their gift of healing comes from the Most High, and they are rewarded by the king. The skill of physicians makes them distinguished and in the presence of the great they are admired. The Lord created medicines out of the earth and the sensible will not despise them. Was not water made sweet with a tree in order that its power might be known? And He gave skill to human beings that He might be glorified in his marvellous works. By them the physician heals and takes away pain; the pharmacist makes a mixture from them. God's works will never be finished; and from Him health spreads over all the earth. (Ecclesiasticus 38: 1-8, trans. in Kee (1994), 96).

¹⁰³⁸ *Miracula* 67, translation by Talbot (1983), 117.

¹⁰³⁹ *Mir.* 14.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Augustine, *Exposition on Psalm* 85.9. Boulding's translation in Rotelle (2002), 230.

¹⁰⁴¹ López-Salvá (1972-3), 318.

¹⁰⁴² Vikan (1984), 86.

¹⁰⁴³ Cisterns within monastic communities provided protection as well as water. The fourth-century ascetic Melania built a monastery for virgins “whom she trained as a group from the first not to associate with a man. She constructed for them a cistern (*ἐνδον ὑδρολον*) within the monastery and supplied all their bodily needs, saying to them, ‘I myself will properly attend to everything for you ...and I will not let you lack any necessities [even in regard to water supply]. Only be warned about associating with men.’” *Life of Melania* 41, translation by Clark (1984), 55.

¹⁰⁴⁴ López-Salvá (1972-3), 318, comments on the classical persuasion that the *dynamis* of a divinity emanated from his/her finger. See Artem. 5.89. She also identifies (p. 317) water, as Thekla used it in this miracle, as the principal therapeutic element in the *iamata* and as a medium for the *dynamis* of the healer. She cites *Mir.* 36, in which the sick animals “drank health” as an example of the cathartic power of water.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Daphne was a resort area near Antioch. About Daphne, Libanius wrote:

When a man see [Daphne] he cannot but cry out and leap for joy and skip and clap his hands and bless himself for seeing the sight...there pours upon the beholder’s eyes...the shady paths, the choruses of singing birds, the even breeze, the odors sweeter than spices...The place is so helpful to the body that if you leave after even a brief stay, you will go away healthier than when you came. (Oration 11.236, trans. in Downey (1962), 36-7)

¹⁰⁴⁶ Despite the reference to Daphne, the passage also shares parallels with the account of the Jewish children in the fiery furnace in the apocryphal book of Azariah:

But the angel of the Lord came down into the furnace to be with Azariah and his companions and drove the fiery flame out of the furnace and made the inside of the furnace as though a moist wind were whistling through it. The fire did not touch them at all and caused them no pain or distress. (*Azariah* 26-7, trans. in Kee (1994), 122)

¹⁰⁴⁷ St. John the Almsgiver 7. Dawes and Baynes (1977), 203. This passage from the *vita* of St. John the Almsgiver is particularly precious for, as Schmitt Pantel (2000), 299, states, “Prior to Christian accounts of miracles we have little information about childbirth among the poor.” St. John the Merciful (*Ἐλεήμων*) was patriarch of Alexandria in the early seventh century and was an associate of Sophronios and John Moschos both of whom wrote his *vita*.

¹⁰⁴⁸ An Asklepiian cure effected by the mixing of altar ash (an ingredient of soap) and wine is recorded on an inscription at Tiber. *IG* 14.966. *OGIS* 1173. For more on Asklepiian temples, see above, note 949 and page 306.

¹⁰⁴⁹ A reference to cosmetics and the disfigurement of the face is found in Jerome’s letter (*Ep.* 107.15) to Eustochium about her mother Paula. Jerome records the episode in which, in response to his exhortations that she should rest her eyes from tears so that they might be preserved for the reading of the Gospels, Paula replied, “I must disfigure this face which contrary to God’s commandment, I <previously> painted with rouge, lead, and antimony.”

¹⁰⁵⁰ Marcos (1975), 111.

¹⁰⁵¹ August. *Exp. ep. ad Galatas* 56.15-17. Translated by Plumer (2003), 221-225.

¹⁰⁵² Kötting(1950), 218, for examples of these remedies in the miracles of Cosmas and Damian. He also cites their use as *eulogiae*. Also see Dagron (1978), 106, n. 4.

¹⁰⁵³ Patlagean is cited in Talbot (2002), 161.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Talbot (2002), 159-60. As an example see the *vita* of St. Theodore the Sykeote. In section 112, Theodore saves a boy who fell into a cauldron of boiling liquid by anointing him with oil from the

“sleepless lamp.” Also see *Los Thaumata*, (*Mir.* 50) Cyrus and John affirm that the oil is powerful against all sicknesses.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Talbot (2002), 161.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *Myrtle Wood* 130-5. This is a very revealing passage as to how the Isaurian community may have viewed Thekla and Christians in general. The father of the crippled girl instructs his wife to transport their daughter by night because as he explains, “I am a leader of the city and I am afraid to go off <to Thekla> for I think she happens <to be one> of the Galileans, and if I go off to her, the city <will> learn and they <will> hand me over to the fire.” A person walked a fine line when he was a chief of the Isaurians.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Mir.* 17.25.

¹⁰⁵⁸ *Mir.* 18.34.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Wipszycka (1970), 511-25.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Judge (1977), 89.

¹⁰⁶¹ Marcos (1975), 52, n. 30.

¹⁰⁶² Fengren (1988), 794 and 797.

¹⁰⁶³ In regard to their liturgical functions, Fengren (1988), 794 and n. 3 cites Ewa Wipszycka (1970), 513-5. *Parabalani* is thought by many to come from the word *παραβάλλεσθαι* “to risk;” another explanation is provided by Cabrol: “Une autre étymologie tire plaisamment *parabalani* de *παραβολή*, parabole, parce que les médecins usent volontiers de paraboles et paraissent au vulgaire d’autant plus savants qu’ils sont plus loquaces.” Leclercq and Cabrol, (1920-1953), 13.2, s.v. col. 1574-8, esp. 1578.

¹⁰⁶⁴ See Fengren (1988), 794. This maverick group of care-givers grew unruly over time. At the Robbers’ Council, they were even conscripted by Cyrus to intimidate the opposition. They were also implicated in the Alexandrian riots during which the pagan female philosopher Hypatia was murdered. See Socrates, *HE* 7.15. Theodosius II described them as *qui ad curanda debiliū aegra copora deputantur* but passed legislation to curtail their activities. Rulings limiting the excesses of the *parabalani* are contained in the *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.42/416 and 43/18 and the *Cod. Iust.* 1.3.17-18. They were also actively involved in violence and intimidation against the opponents of Cyril during the Robbers’ Council in 449 in Ephesus.

¹⁰⁶⁵ According to Marcos (1975), 52, the *philoponoi* are mentioned frequently in Sophronius’ account of the miracles of Cyrus and John. Sophronius describes the *philoponoi* as the strong among the weak (*ἐξ αὐτῶν δὲ εἰσι τῶν ἀσθενῶν οἱ δυνάμενοι*), Marcos renders the phrase as “the convalescent sick” and sees them as helping to execute that which the Saints ordered during incubation to those who were ill. Kugener (as cited by Marcos (1975), 52 and n. 30), writes that the *philoponoi* “sont appellés en d’autres lieux zélateurs et dans d’autres encore compagnons.”

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Παθός* occurs thirteen times in the text (twice in reference to the author’s anthrax). *Παθός* does not occur in the NT but rather *πάθημα* for “suffering, affliction.”

¹⁰⁶⁷ *Mir.* 12.12; 38.34; 40.6 (twice).

¹⁰⁶⁸ *Mir.* 12.32.

¹⁰⁶⁹ King (1998), 123-6.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Stark (1996).

¹⁰⁷¹ The second-century journal of Aelius Aristides, who has been described as a “professional patient who enjoyed his bad health,” reflects the experience of the chronically ill and the health care alternatives available to them. See *Aelius Aristides* (1981).

¹⁰⁷² For example, see Aristides, *HL* 2.5, 63. For a comprehensive list including inscriptionary citations, see Horstmanshoff (2004), 328-9, n. 10.

¹⁰⁷³ *Mir.* 11.10-2.

- ¹⁰⁷⁴ *Mir.* 12.14-16.
- ¹⁰⁷⁵ *Mir.* 25.10-12. See also *Mir.* 14.27-8; 18.28-31; 38.4-6.
- ¹⁰⁷⁶ *Mir.* 14, 18 (Aba), 19, 23, 24, 38, 39, and 42.
- ¹⁰⁷⁷ *Mir.* 14 and 24 respectively.
- ¹⁰⁷⁸ *Mir.* 7, 8, 12, 17, 18, and 41.
- ¹⁰⁷⁹ *Mir.* 25 and 37.
- ¹⁰⁸⁰ *Mir.* 11 and 40.
- ¹⁰⁸¹ López-Salvá (1972-3), 268.
- ¹⁰⁸² *Life* 10.8 and 14; 24.29; 25.25.
- ¹⁰⁸³ Thekla also delivered the city from an eye epidemic.
- ¹⁰⁸⁴ King (1998), 109. We might call to mind here the case of Gorgonia, Gregory of Nazianzus' sister, who, for modesty's sake, though she had been trampled by a team of mules and had broken bones and internal injuries, would not submit to examination by doctors but instead "betook herself to the Physician of all." A second time, suffering from a severe illness, she obtained healing by anointing herself with the elements of the eucharist. (Greg. Naz. *Or.* 8. 15-8). Gregory of Nyssa's sister Macrina also refused medical help with a tumor of the breast because she "judged it worse than the pain to uncover any part of her body to a stranger's eyes". Gr. Nyss. *Macr.* 992.
- ¹⁰⁸⁵ *Mir.* 14, 18b, 39, and 40.
- ¹⁰⁸⁶ Marcos (1975), 40.
- ¹⁰⁸⁷ *Mir.* 7.23; 17.37; 18.9; 25.17; 38.12; 41.18; 38.42-4.
- ¹⁰⁸⁸ See, for example, *Los Thaumata, Miracles* 13; 8; 23; 37; 41 and the *Miracles of Artemios* 3; 4; 7; 9; 12; 13; 28; 32; 41; 58 as cited by Marcos (1975), 41.
- ¹⁰⁸⁹ *Mir.* 14.30.
- ¹⁰⁹⁰ *Mir.* 12.21-2 and 33-4.
- ¹⁰⁹¹ Marcos (1975), 42.
- ¹⁰⁹² *Mir.* 25.34-40.
- ¹⁰⁹³ *Mir.* 25.6 and 49-53.
- ¹⁰⁹⁴ See Marcos (1975), 67-70. Marcos (1975), 70, sees the proselytism by punishment as evidence of the "monastic intolerance of the age."
- ¹⁰⁹⁵ Acts 9.1-19, esp. .9; Acts 22.4-17.
- ¹⁰⁹⁶ See Marcos (1975), 42. Marcos (1975), 73, regards the number three as having almost magical properties in *Los Thaumata*. I appreciate Dr. G. Francine Michaud's comment to me that perhaps it has "trinitarian reference".
- ¹⁰⁹⁷ López-Salvá (1972-3), 280.
- ¹⁰⁹⁸ Marcos (1975), 227.

CHAPTER 13:
RECEPTION OF THE *MIRACLES*

Thekla's story, as related in the *ATH*, was well-known and widely circulated in late antiquity and early Byzantine times. There were alternate endings for the *ATH* and her story was told in different traditions with adjustments suitable to the respective cultures. Methodius' *Symposium of the Ten Virgins* stands outside the Thekla cycle as presented in the *ATH* and was also well-received. Various aspects of Thekla's story were referenced in homilies, poems, sermons, martyrologies, hymns, and liturgical rites. There are numerous visual representations of the scenes from her sufferings and trials as told in the *ATH* but none from the expansion of the *ATH* by Ps.-Basil in the *Life*.

Missing References to the *Miracles*

And while references to Thekla and her story continue long after the composition of the *Miracles*, to date, none can be directly connected with material from the *Miracles*. Only four manuscripts of the *Miracles* are now extant. As already noted, those manuscripts were misattributed for most of their history to Ps.-Basil's archnemesis Basil, the bishop of Seleucia.

Only three references to Thekla in other sources may be traced to the *Life*—and, of those, only one *might* have links to the *Miracles* as well. These include the reference to Thekla's "living disappearance" into the ground by Severus of Antioch in *Oratio 97* which may be drawn from the *Life* (or simply from the alternate ending of the *ATH* in Greek that includes the account of Thekla's burial at Rome), that alternate ending itself and the *Myrtle Wood* account with its mention of Achaios.

Achaios is mentioned both in the *Life* and in the *Myrtle Wood* (51-3) but not in the *Miracles*. In the *Life*, Ps.-Basil refers, however, to his and Achaios' plan to compose a second work on Thekla (i.e. her miracles). Achaios is named in the *Life*'s prologue as the human agency or, as Johnson puts it, "the individual impetus," through which Ps.-Basil was encouraged to write the *Life* or "history of the Apostle [Thekla]:"

But, on the one hand, I have come to the history of the Apostle and Martyr, Thekla, often provoked by a divine voice [Thekla's] and, on the other hand, directed by the advice of a very fine man—I mean Achaios, an excellent person and a very wise one.¹⁰⁹⁹

Some argue that Achaios may have been a pure invention by Ps.-Basil patterned after Theophilus, the dedicatee for whom the Evangelist Luke wrote the biblical *Acts of the Apostles* (which some scholars also suggest is a literary convention—so much for the inerrant word of God). Ps.-Basil himself draws a connection between his partnership with Achaios and that of Luke and Theophilus:

But [I have undertaken this work] that we might adorn (*κοσμήσωμεν*) ourselves by this holy task, and that we might fulfill this—a vow which we agonized over long ago, and that we might make known to humans hereafter the person who encouraged us to do this work. Just as, therefore, the admirable Luke has clearly done in the divine Gospels and in the composition about the apostles, by placing at the beginning Theophilus, to whom he dedicated also his entire work of divine writings. And thus I shall begin the history of the maiden.¹¹⁰⁰

Achaios is referenced, though not by name, in the closing lines of the *Life* when Ps.-Basil contemplates moving on to the next project, the composition of the *Miracles*:

O Virgin, Martyr, and Apostle, may it be that the one who has commissioned us—I mean the holy man and your protégé (*τρόφιμον*)¹¹⁰¹—and me who have been prevailed upon and for a long time have been striving to bring to

fruition this desire that in some way or other an account be made of your deeds—may it be that we always meet with your mercy and good-will.¹¹⁰²

In the *Myrtle Wood*, Achaios appears again. Here we learn that he is a descendant of a pagan priest of Seleucia, who after a brief and unsettling encounter with Thekla, described her likeness to a painter and commissioned a portrait of her “which he treasured in his own house having come to believe in the message of the Apostle [Thekla].” The portrait was passed down through the priest’s family and finally to the “illustrious Achaios” who is described as a learned sophist, a Christian, and a guardian (*παρὰμονάριος*) of Thekla’s *martyrion*. Achaios generously provided copies of Thekla’s portrait to those who desired them and at the time of his burial, the portrait was made accessible to the public.¹¹⁰³ It is conceivable that Achaios, with such strong ties to Thekla and her *temenos*, might well have been involved in securing her story for posterity. We actually learn more explicit details about Achaios in the narratives than we do about Ps.-Basil. The fact that Achaios also appears in the *Myrtle Wood*, a work by an author other than Ps.-Basil, and in a context other than that of dedicatee, suggests that he was no mere fabrication. To date, the *Myrtle Wood*, in its inclusion of Achaios, is the only extant textual link to the *Miracles* and only by way of its organic association with the *Life*. Neither is there any extant iconographic representation of scenes from the *Miracles*.

Why a Lack of Reception of the *L&M*?

The question arises as to why, though Thekla was universally esteemed, the *Life & Miracles* met with such an unremarkable reception. There are twelve extant

manuscripts of the *Life*, four of which contain the only known copies of the *Miracles*. There are a number of factors to consider in regard to its reception.

Some scholars suggest that there may have been a *damnatio* of the *Life & Miracles*.¹¹⁰⁴ A *damnatio* could have been sparked by the strained relationship between Ps.-Basil and Bishop Basil, or by the unidentified issue behind the author's excommunication, or by the subtle battle for supremacy of the texts about Thekla (the traditional *ATH*, Ps.-Basil's *L&M*, and Basil's poem about Thekla) or by tension between the ascetic way of life at Hagia Thekla which represented older traditions¹¹⁰⁵ and with which Ps.-Basil aligned himself versus that of the urban ecclesiastics of Seleucia.

Another influencing factor in the reception of the *Miracles* may have been the very ethnicity of the work. In an effort to establish the work's credibility, Ps.-Basil strove to anchor his narrative with facts: "persons, names and places." His conscious attention to validation and verification, however, also served to heighten the localized nature of the work, thereby distancing it from the global Christian community. Schulenburg addresses this phenomenon:

Despite ideological attempts at universal appeal, many of the local cults of the holy dead remained rather localized reflecting local roots and regional interests. This seems to have been especially true for female saints.¹¹⁰⁶

Ps.-Basil intent was for the text's universal application; the picture that emerged from the *Miracles*, however, was distinctly regional.

Throughout their long history, the Isaurians of Rough Cilicia were regarded as the "other" and as being beyond the pale of civilization—and even as a bane to civilization. This wild, untamed region birthed a slightly different Christianity that was in some

respects out of step with and unfamiliar to the greater Church. The extreme religious tolerance displayed in the text, the high place accorded to women and marriage (so reflective of central Asiatic society and Isaurians in particular),¹¹⁰⁷ and the picture it advanced of Thekla as a warrior-saint (so perfect for Isauria) may well have struck an unfamiliar and perhaps disconcerting note to those beyond the borders of Rough Cilicia.

As we have noted already, according to the *vita* of the Isaurian St. Konon, even St. Paul himself was not up to the job of evangelizing such a violent people! The degree to which Thekla is portrayed as a warrior diminishes and dissipates as one moves outward from the epicentre of her cult at Hagia Thekla and the borders of Rough Cilicia. The representation of Thekla's warlike spirit is directly proportional to proximity to her territory. We have already seen that, in the western empire, Thekla functioned more in the way of an ideal—as the Virgin-Martyr.¹¹⁰⁸ In the east, however, she was patroness saint of the Isaurians and of the Emperor Zeno, who himself was an Isaurian and despised by many for being so.¹¹⁰⁹ While, in time, many Isaurians embraced Christianity (and even figured among the chief builders of the Hagia Sophia and participated in the construction of St. Symeon's monastery at the Wondrous Mountain), Isaurian insurrectionists continued to cause unrest to the point that the Emperor Anastasius, at the end of the fifth century, ordered a mass relocation of the Isaurian people, moving them away from their mountain strongholds to lowlands in far away Thrace.¹¹¹⁰ The ethnicity attached to the *Life & Miracles* may not have recommended it to the majority of Christendom.

The *Miracles* functioned as a foundation legend for Seleucia but there were other competing cult centers of Thekla devotion. That factor may have contributed to a suppression of the text in other places.

Another consideration is the point in the development of hagiographical texts that the fifth-century *Life & Miracles* was composed. Most miracle collections were compiled a good deal later than the text—in the seventh century or beyond.¹¹¹¹ At the time Ps.-Basil conceived and created his work, there was no formal or formulaic structure for Christian miracle collections. He could only look to classical models for his literary endeavours. The *Life & Miracles* stands at the beginning of a new genre and, as we have seen in a previous section, it was composed for two distinctly different audiences—a Christian one and a sophisticated one that was not yet persuaded. Ps.-Basil's was an original, creative, and bold venture.

It is to be expected that his non-Christian readership would not preserve the work, while a later Christian audience may have found the parts designed to capture and arrest the attention of an unbelieving world inappropriate devotional material.

The Non-Reception of the *Miracles*

Ps.-Basil's express desire was the future success and reception of his life work:

Hereafter, it would be up to you [Thekla] now also to perform this <miracle> along with the others: on the one hand, the reception of these small and insignificant <writings> offered to you from small and insignificant <beginnings> and, on the other hand, the presentation of them as great and wonderful...So now, pour forth and bestow your copious and abundant grace on these <writings>, that I ever may be regarded highly or become so you through you and your grace.¹¹¹²

It seems that Thekla did not come through for him on this one.

As the manuscript tradition suggests, the *Life* was more favourably received than the *Miracles*. The *Life* was an expansion (and an orthodox one at that) of the *ATH* which,

while not included among the canonical books,¹¹¹³ was esteemed by many Christians (Egeria, for one) and regarded as authentic, despite Tertullian's harangue.

In the *Symposium*, Methodius implicitly cites the *Ath* as a foundation for Thekla's authority to speak. Arete introduces Thekla's discourse with this endorsement:

We know that you [Thekla] are second to none in your grasp of philosophy and universal culture, and I need hardly mention that you were instructed in divine and evangelical doctrine by Paul himself.¹¹¹⁴

Another factor that may have contributed to the lukewarm reception of the *Miracles* is what Johnson identifies as Ps.-Basil's "singular vision" of Thekla:

[It] is idiosyncratic and does not correspond to anyone else's picture of Thekla: neither that of Tertullian, Methodius, Egeria, or Gregory of Nazianzus.¹¹¹⁵

Johnson's reflections on the plight of the *Life & Miracles* are worthy of reflection:

Thus, it is a sad conclusion to the saga of this author that, despite his extensive reworking and adornment of the received tradition, his unique reading of Thecla's local legend in the *L&M* was ultimately unsuccessful in the Byzantine literary world...Consequently, no mention of the *L&M* occurs outside the twelve Byzantine manuscripts that preserve it [the eight of the *Life* and the four of the *Miracles*]. This is a silence which testifies more, one would hope, to the long term resonance of Thecla's association with the Apostle Paul than it does to the literary success of the *L&M* in overturning that tradition.¹¹¹⁶

The *Life's* popularity rode on the coattails of the *Ath*, while the reception of the *Miracles*, which were more idiosyncratic and regional, was linked to that of the *Life's*. Ps.-Basil could perhaps take comfort in that, while only four manuscripts of his *Miracles* are extant today, not one copy survives of the poem of Thekla's life (attested by Photius)¹¹¹⁷ by Basil of Seleucia, his arch rival.

A final consideration that may have influenced the survival of the text—tied as it was to Hagia Thekla—is the subsequent history of the region itself. A large number of the Isaurian population was resettled in the west; others became builders in Constantinople and eastward in Syria; others still served in the military; Arab invasions swept through the region; many monastics sought refuge in the west; and pilgrimage to Hagia Thekla sharply declined. The memory of the text and the *temenos* may have blurred and been swept away with the tide of time—but Thekla’s story endured.

Notes to Chapter 13

¹⁰⁹⁹ *Life* prologue 31-4.

¹¹⁰⁰ *Life* prologue 40-7.

¹¹⁰¹ The word *τρόφιμον* suggests that Achaïos, when he was young, was in some sense under the tutelage of Thekla, perhaps raised at her *temenos*. The word is used only one other time in the *Life & Miracles*, in *Mir.* 11. 19, to describe the young lad, born of Christian parents, but brought by his pagan grandmother to Hagia Thekla for healing. Thekla heals him, we are told, in part because he was her *τρόφιμος*.

¹¹⁰² *Life* 28.53-9.

¹¹⁰³ *Myrtle Wood* 26-50. Dagrón sees this episode with the veneration of a portrait as an indication that it was written during a period when icons were an issue.

¹¹⁰⁴ See Krueger (2004), 92.

¹¹⁰⁵ Johnson (2006, 20 and n. 10), in his literary study of the *Life & Miracles*, remarks on the meaning of Achaïos' name that it might serve to invoke older and purer ways. Certainly Ps.-Basil expresses his desire for a "recovery" in the epilogue of the *Miracles* when he writes:

With these things in mind, O Virgin, grant that we may be seen again in the holy rostrum of the holy pulpit of this church, preaching those things that are divinely ordained and many other topics which are customarily preached in the churches...and recovering again the traditions (*τά συνήθη κομιζομένους πάλιν*), the power to persuade those listening, the reverence, the advancement of the people, and the increase of faith and piety. (*Mir.* epilogue 36-8)

¹¹⁰⁶ Schulenburg (1998), 25. See also, Schulenburg (1990), 287.

¹¹⁰⁷ As an example, consider the Isaurian pirate princess Aba who successfully negotiated terms with Cleopatra and Mark Antony. See Strabo 14.5.10.

¹¹⁰⁸ Hayne (1994), 210, 211, 212.; Pesthy (1996), 175.

¹¹⁰⁹ In the fifth century, Isaurians and the Emperor Zeno were explicitly despised due to their race: Joshua the Stylite, 12.14; *Cod. Theod.* 9.35.7; Eunapius, *Hist. frg.* 71.4 (Blockley); Candidus, *frg.* 1 (Blockley); Malchus, *frg.* 22; John of Antioch *frg.* 24b; Evag. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* 3.29. For more on the Isaurians as a distinct ethnic entity, see Honey (2006b), 49, n. 13.

¹¹¹⁰ For more on the Isaurians and their perspective on the conflicts, see Honey (2006b), 47-55.

¹¹¹¹ The *vita* of St Antony of is a different nature and Augustine's record of miracles is more a journal. For a discussion and a select catalogue of Christian miracle collections, see Johnson (2006), Appendix 3, 239-43. The two collections closest to the *Life & Miracles* are the *Miracles of St. Menas* thought to have been composed in the fifth century (or later) and the *Miracles of Cosmas and Damian* dated to the sixth century with later redactions.

¹¹¹² *Life* epilogue 12-14, 17-19.

¹¹¹³ Schüssler Fiorenza's statement, (1983), 173, that "in many regions this book [*APTh*] was regarded as canonical in the first three centuries" has been quoted by many later scholars. The claim, however, is completely unfounded and unsubstantiated and should be discontinued in scholarly discussion.

¹¹¹⁴ Meth. *Symp.* 8, Thekla's introduction by Arete.

¹¹¹⁵ Johnson (2006), 6

¹¹¹⁶ Johnson (2006), 226.

¹¹¹⁷ Phot. *Bibl.* 168.

CHAPTER 14:
TRANSLATION OF THE *MIRACLES OF ST. THEKLA*
AND THE *MYRTLE WOOD*

**A Note on the Text and the English Translation of the *Miracles of St. Thekla*
and of the *Myrtle Wood***

What follows is the first English translation of the *Miracles of St. Thekla* and my translation of the *Myrtle Wood*. I am indebted both to Dr. Haijo Westra who read and made suggestions for my first draft and to Dr. Elizabeth Bryson Bongie who consequently examined my translations and suggested improvements and provided constructive criticism. Without their help and encouragement, this project would not have been possible.

The text used for the basis of my translation is that of Dagron's 1978 edition.¹¹¹⁸ I have not examined the original manuscripts. In *Miracle* 14 an alternative reading has been preferred.

Precisely because this is the first English translation, I have attempted to stay true to the text so as to provide a literal translation. That commitment, however, renders a less elegant version. (I hope to produce a more elegant one in the future once a careful semantic analysis of certain terms is complete).

In the course of the translation, it became apparent that for Ps.-Basil some words have semantic fields that do not directly align with our usual translation of them. Some of these words, particularly architectural and building terms, I have chosen to simply

transliterate until such time as a detailed semantic analysis can be done: *daimon*, *neos*, *naos*, *temenos*, *thalamos*, *martyrion*, and *nympheutērion*. In this way, other scholars who access this translation as a resource for their own studies will not be misguided. Our understanding of certain terms (e.g. *neos* and *temenos*) surely would benefit from a comparison with archaeological data from the site itself. The archaeology of Hagia Thekla is discussed in Appendix A.

Angled brackets < > and sometimes square brackets [] are used to indicate what is not in the Greek but has been included by way of [explanation] or <elaboration> of the original Greek sentence.

A final note: in the course of my actual translation of the *Miracles* certain aspects relating to Ps.-Basil's stylistics caught my attention but lay beyond the scope of this study. A stylistic analysis as a basis for comparison with other miracle collections would be highly desirable. A stylistic analysis could also settle the question of authorship if any doubt still remains; however, there seems to be no detailed *stylistic* analysis of Ps.-Basil's Greek prose,¹¹¹⁹ nor established criteria for such a study.

In this regard, Christian Høgel's study of *Symeon Metaphrastes: Rewriting and Canonization* may be helpful. Høgel follows his observation that "style is a very flickery concept" with a list of elements that may be identified as part of Metaphrastic style.¹¹²⁰ Høgel's list may provide a useful starting point for determining a methodology for Ps.-Basil's Late Classical/Early Byzantine Greek prose style.

In a similar vein, I identify the *Myrtle Wood* as the work of an author other than Ps.-Basil based on disparate phrasing in the two texts. I mention here but two in way of example. Ps.-Basil regularly refers to Seleucia with such sentiment as "this our city"

while the author of the *Myrtle Wood* never refers to the city in a possessive sense but rather as “the city of the Seleucians”. While both texts contain triune formulas for Thekla—Apostle, Martyr, and Virgin—the ordering of the terms in the *Life & Miracles* and the *Myrtle Wood* differs in regard to priority of emphasis (as discussed in Chapter 3). Even without the benefit of detailed stylistic and lexical analyses, these differences strongly suggest different authorship.

The Miracles of St. Thekla

Prologue

By its very nature, truth above all adorns the praises attached to anyone or anything; and the two foundation stones of praise are primarily these: life and deeds. And so, since we have already presented many very fine stories about Thekla in the preceding account of her, it is necessary, then, to follow up what has already been related and to shed light on the truth. For this reason, without need for much reflection or effort, we have compiled her miracles in no particular order and have published them as well in a brief composition. Not all of them, however! Nor even the majority of them all, but a very few in total, and then only those miracles that have happened in our day or to those shortly before us and again of these only very few and only as many as we were able to collect from reliable men and women in order that it may not be possible for those who come across them to disbelieve what we have related before, but rather that they may harvest belief from the miracles being performed now and from those already performed and from her earlier struggles and trials. For this reason, we have mentioned persons, places, and names so that our readers will not only have no doubts about her miracles and life, but also will be able to have close at hand <the evidence> and to examine for themselves the truth of what we have said.

Introduction

The interpreters and the attendants of the oracular *daemones*¹¹²¹ and the exegetes of the Pythian fantasies—I am speaking of the celebrated Zeus in Dodona and of Pythian Apollo in Delphi, or also of the Apollo who exercises prophetic powers by the Castalian spring, of Asclepius in Pergamum and in Epidaurus and also in nearby Aigai—have

given in writing many oracles and remedies for misfortunes. Some of these are fables and forgeries and inventions of the transcribers who desire to confer power and a certain strength and foresight upon the *daemones*; while others are plausible utterances and often even useful; they are also full of duplicity and ambiguities. As a result, those consulting them are always filled with perplexity, unable to know how to use the oracles, or when they have used them, wholly ruined by the predictions and oracles themselves. Actually in enigmas and riddles lies the ultimate goal of oracles. Because they have no direct access to the truth or means whereby they might predict the future clearly, whatever prophecies they make are obscure and devious besides misleading and meandering in a thousand directions, so that the failures <to interpret them properly> are not those of the *daemones*, but rather the fault of those who do not really understand the prophecies.

For example, when Croesus consulted Apollo and inquired whether he was going to prevail over Cyrus—after Croesus had probably offered many prayers, and also many sacrifices and had donated money in the hope of a brilliant and decisive victory—the defeat of Cyrus—after all this, what does the amazing seer say? “After crossing the river Halys, Croesus will destroy a great kingdom.”

Either because Loxias¹¹²² surrendered the interpretation to the one receiving it, or because he was wicked and betrayed the suppliant, or because he himself was also ignorant of how and in what manner the future would turn out, this oracle completely destroyed Croesus. For Croesus himself, seduced by this specious oracle, boldly crossed the river Halys in the hope of a brilliant and decisive victory. He met with Cyrus in battle, and though overcome by force, did not realize that he had himself destroyed his own great kingdom. Thus he left to the excellent oracle even an excuse that he had not

understood the answer, the god having prescribed the opposite—that neither should he cross the river Halys nor engage Cyrus since he would destroy his own great kingdom by doing so. And if someone would not believe me that these things were said by the most excellent Pythia and happened to Croesus, let him take up dear old Herodotus and from that source let him pick out for himself what is credible concerning these things.¹¹²³ I pass over the other oracle concerning this Croesus and the mule that it said would reign and the deception by which Croesus was deceived, for after not many days, he did see the donkey ruling. This was Cyrus, the son of Cambyses the Persian, and of Mandana daughter of Astyages the Mede. The difference between these races was what the miraculous oracle referred to darkly, but the obscurity and the ambiguity “turned the trick.”

Such are, to cite a few examples out of so many, the oracles of the *daemones*: deceptive, evil, devious, specious and treacherous, completely shrouded in obscurity and wholly false. But it remains to be asked of what sort are the remedies and the predictions of the saints? Plain, true, straightforward, holy, complete, totally worthy of the God who has given them. Indeed there is no other way for the saints to prophesy to us except through the grace of Christ alone. Actually first they themselves experience it, and they redistribute it to those who ask, in the same way as stream beds, so to speak, drawing from a very high and sacred spring channel the sacred waters to those who are thirsty. Among these holy saints is the very great martyr Thekla, who is ever present, ever going to and fro, always listening to those who pray and ungrudgingly watching over everyone: the healthy, the sick; the cheerful, the disheartened; seafarers, wayfarers; those who are in danger and those who are not; individuals, groups, families, tribes, cities, peoples;

strangers and citizens alike; residents and foreigners; men and women; masters and servants; elderly and young; rich and poor; those in government; those in military; those in court cases; those at war and those at peace. Already she has appeared both to the Jews and to the Greeks many times and has manifested the same power to them—instead of counsel and instead of warnings, she provides her service. To put it briefly, continually present to humans through all kinds of gifts, she works miracles. Conversely, against all those who sin repeatedly and provoke her, she mobilizes her strength and anger, never neglecting those who live in a holy manner nor sparing those who commit unholy practices, at one time manifestly dealing the latter and at another time, the former, always demonstrating by these works in each case her severity as well as her love for mankind. For she did not dole out her services only when in the body and among humans and then stopped them after she died; on the contrary, she is in the company of angels, yet she is not absent from us even now, but in a better home and with more powerful aid she continues to care for and to watch over us. And to take only a small portion of the miracles, come now, let us relate those miracles which we have long known and those agreed upon by many, and of which we all have direct knowledge and experience, some that we have benefited from personally and others that we have heard about from those who benefited from them. I shall begin with those miracles she performed especially for herself and against the *daemones*.

Miracle 1

There is no one who does not know about our Sarpedon, for we have learned the ancient legend concerning him through books and stories.¹¹²⁴ As in days of old, because

of pagan beliefs unacceptable at this present time, but nonetheless with ancient roots, some know how this man, as a stranger and foreigner seeking his blood sister <Europa>, wandering, was brought to land here in these regions by the sea. Because of his ignorance of the topography, and of who was then reigning—this <king> was of divine lineage and his uncle, Kilix—he <Sarpedon> was killed since he somehow offended and got into a disagreement with the people of the region, and <Sarpedon> was buried near the sea wall and this beach. And therefore, he acquired both title of “*daemon*” and reputation as an oracle and seer, and therefore seeming to the foolish to be a god—for the long span of time produces such nonsense; men accept these stories without examination and make gods from myths. As soon as the Maiden arrived in this region and reached its borders and took possession of this summit, she reduced him again and rendered him silent. And to this day she keeps the multi-voiced oracle-giver silent, having built as a fortress against him the authoritative and royal word: “Silence! Be muzzled!” So then, he is silent, still and cowering. He even departed, I think, from his own tomb and site, yielding to humble men waiting patiently with prayers and entreaties, this place whether one wishes to call it tomb or *temenos*—but, hereafter, an abode of God. Such is the beginning of the miracles of the Martyr—one which no one still disputes, which those from here see with their own eyes, but at which all people are amazed.

Miracle 2

After this, Thekla attacked the nearby summit, which previously was named *Κωκύσιον ὄρος* <the Wailing Mount?> but over time came to be known as the sanctuary of Athena Kanitis <*κανίτιδος*> after the old myth.¹¹²⁵ As if the mountain could

be a sanctuary of Athena! This site also is wrestled away from the *daemon* <Athena>, and placed under the lordship of Christ (just as it had been from the beginning) and now the place is occupied by martyrs as some lofty citadel by generals and warlords—and is now inhabited by holy men. For not even Pallas, the shield-bearer and the guardian of the city, could endure the assault of the Maiden—unarmed <though she was>, foreign, and without armour.

Miracle 3

In regard to the excellent Aphrodite, giving no account to her, with only a rebuke as to a wanton prostitute—she dismissed her and cast her out from the city, having armed against her a Diomedes of her own—Dexianos.¹¹²⁶

Miracle 4

Having accomplished these things, she turned the war effort against Zeus himself, the chief of the *daemones*. She conquered him with truly manly courage and banished him from the city as a tyrant, <and> a scoundrel. And she made his *neos* an abode for her teacher, Paul, just as Paul also had done for her in his city of Tarsus, so they could host one another and be hosted in turn and hospitably receive each other's citizens. And so Paul is the host for the people of Seleucia, and the Maiden is the host for those of Tarsus; and a considerable competition of a sort exists for these citizens, whether to run up to the apostle for his festival—or from there in like manner to go down for the feast of Thekla. And great is the rivalry that has grown among us all concerning this, one that especially befits a Christian people and their children.

Such are the Martyr's miracles against the *daemones*. It is impossible even for those who very much wish to disbelieve <the miracles> to disagree with them or not to speak of them at all or relate them to others. For who could deny those things so manifest to the eyes of all or claim they did not happen thus? The victory against such ancient *daemones* and so mighty a force of their worshippers arrayed against her—these consisted of entire cities and entire peoples—belongs only to God and the martyrs appointed by Him for this task. Just as Christ precisely apportioned specific saints specific cities and regions to cleanse the earth thoroughly, so also He apportioned this region to her, as He had Judea to Peter and the Nations <Gentiles> to Paul. But we must pass on now to the remaining miracles of the Martyr, but this must be by way of preface: it was neither simple nor easy for all people to encounter God—so sublime and lofty His power—accessible neither to angels nor archangels, and much less to people. For they are hindered from perceiving that divine voice either because of their way of life or their character or both; and the more so in as much as mankind is always attracted by danger and pierced by many diverse griefs and sorrows. But God, who loves mankind and is most merciful and generous, sows His saints on the earth in the same way He would assign the world to the finest doctors. He has done this so that they <the saints>, on the one hand, being in some way nearer, can perform miracles with no difficulty for those who are in need of them, able to give ear immediately and to supply the remedy. On the other hand, through God's grace and might, the saints can perform great miracles that in particular require His aid—as emissaries, intercessors, and advocates on behalf of nations, cities, races and peoples, against plagues, famines, wars, droughts, earthquakes, and whatever the hand of God alone can effectively restrain and halt.

And so it follows that the great martyr, Thekla, granted great power and commissioned for this by Christ, our common King, often ended famine, wiped out plague, quenched drought, broke off wars, delivered up enemies, saved cities, guarded homes, and gave bounteously to all who asked—collectively and individually—but only if one asked for something useful and appropriate, at the same time committing to a life in every way worthy to receive something, but one who is unclean and unholy shall never have access to the holy Martyr. Come, then, let us call to mind the miracles successively from the beginning <performed> either for a group or for individuals so that an unwavering faith may follow for those reading the facts related by us.

Miracle 5

Once a great fear fell upon Seleucia, this city of ours, when brigands, the Agarenes, were intending to march against it—either to capture the city by trickery, or to reduce it through war and fear. All that was needed was to will it and the city would fall into their hands. Since the inhabitants of the city, as people often do, had discounted the rumours then circulating, <and> were sound asleep at the time or dallying at the theatre completely oblivious to the impending danger, the wide-awake enemy <for their part> going without sleep, was already <in their imaginations> about to dole out the possessions and the persons of the inhabitants. And so when the ambush was prepared <and> was already close at hand, disaster was creeping. And also, the night—a time best-suited for a daring attack—was not far advanced, and was moonless, murky, and misty. In addition, deep sleep had overcome the so-called watchmen and the siege engines were already quite near the walls. <Just as> the horrors of capture were now but a breath away

for the inhabitants, and nothing remained <to be done> except to plunder the city forthwith, the Martyr simply appeared upon the wall, radiating light and raising a war cry against the enemy; she diverted them from their attack, and positioned all the inhabitants upon the battlements. In the latter she inspired great courage, but in the former she incited great fear so that contrary to expectation, the city, already under the control of the enemy on all sides, was saved. Consequently the enemy, hoping for a great success but meeting a very great failure, did not forget either the manner or the reason for their misfortune; since that time to the present day, among themselves they still remember the miracle of the Martyr. And out of that wicked company, there are still some alive who sing the praises of the Martyr in these events and who acknowledge their own unexpected defeat.

Miracle 6

But the Maiden was not such a one as to be committed <only> to this city—as if she were its champion, protectrix, mother, and teacher—and to be negligent of the other cities; indeed, she saved even Iconium when it was caught up in similar dangers, although the city had acted insolently toward her and had set ablaze against her the ultimate evil—fire. <Nonetheless>, having rushed over from here she engaged in hand combat against the enemy <that was> attacking <the city>, killing, smiting, and blinding their eyes with a cloud of dust so that everything at their feet was obscured and wrapped in shadows. These actions of hers set the stage for many to be killed and also for many more prisoners to be taken, as well as for all to be subjected to the same danger and loss, so that no one made his way back to tell the tale, as one Homerizing might say.¹¹²⁷ And there still are to this day those who remember this miracle, which dates from before our time, but the one

defeat is not the least inferior to the other, for, in fact, both are the work of One hand, One intent, and One power.

But we are calling to mind these earlier miracles as being more renowned and concerning an entire city; but let us not omit those miracles that concern just one man or woman. For we would do an injustice to her who granted them by relegating such brilliant and outstanding miracles to oblivion and silence and we shall do the greatest damage to those who have received them, if we shall neglect those very events that they regard as by far the greatest and surpassing good of their life —and especially to those who have had a brilliant career at court—which they believe to have been all the more estimable thanks to her. In addition, <by omitting these miracles> we shall penalize people of today and those yet to come, if, through ignorance of their predecessors' blessings, they themselves should appear rather neglectful when making similar requests. And henceforth, <miracles> that are especially worthy of honour and connected to people who are particularly worthy of honour are to be given precedence—and most worthy of honour of all mentioned <are> priests and bishops.

Miracle 7

There is no one in our day who does not know this Dexianos, and we all who do know him also marvel at him as a holy man, a most excellent bishop, and as truly worthy of the respect accorded him (for at that time he was a member of the college of priests, an acolyte of the Martyr herself, and performing whatever duties befitted a priest, an acolyte and a guardian of what is so holy and precious). To continue, some *daemon*, begrudging Dexianos' universal renown, attacked him and he attacked him with an ailment and in a

manner as follows: in the middle of the night, as Dexianos was sitting in the privy,¹¹²⁸ the *daemon* made some kind of a savage and raging demon-like creature appear to him. As soon as he perceived the presence at his side, in part because there was deep and all-obscuring darkness, and in part because it was panting, looking around wildly, and screaming maniacally, Dexianos was stunned and struck with fear, began to tremble, and was completely swamped with terror and sweat. As a result of such fear, his head and neck simultaneously slipped away, so to speak, from their foundation and their proper position, and since the vertebrae were out of alignment and were slipping one from another, his head quivered and quite frequently tottered around so that it was <a cause for> sadness to all who saw him. So what did the Martyr do? Not unaware that a *daemon* had caused this, and full of pity for him who had suffered so greatly, a man who was a priest, an honourable man, and her acolyte, she immediately removed the affliction so that such a great evil was suddenly stopped and blacked out by the miracle. For appearing in the night, she orders him never to despair or fear or <ever in the future> to submit to such acts of little faith, and to employ as a therapy the oil which always fed the vigil light in her own precinct and the holy *bema*. Hearing this, Dexianos was in truth healed by the great joy of just the vision of the wonder-worker. Arising from his couch and anointed with scented oil, which undoubtedly she also had prepared, he had no need of medicine the next day or the day after—except that he applied the gift because he exulted in such aid. Afterwards, this very remedy had the same force again so as to, at yet another time of danger for him, ward off an attack by a *daemon* then too.

Miracle 8

The same martyr extended the same aid to Dexianos for whom things had turned out badly and whose leg was shattered when he was thrown from a skittish horse that he was riding (and one that was not to be reined by a weak hand). She healed him straightway for she cared about the man very much. She worked the same miracle for both the head and the leg. Anyone would be quite amazed at her since these things <were accomplished> without any complicated medications. Revealing to the sufferers what they ought to do, she did not direct those in need to anything rare or very costly, but rather towards something cheap and located near at hand, with the result that the deliverance was more easily facilitated by the faster access to the prescribed medication. In addition, her power was demonstrated through these products so ordinary that their benefits are attributed to the prescriber, not the prescription.

Miracle 9

Who could willingly forget the excellent Menodoros and the miracle concerning him? For he was bishop of Aigai in Cilicia, a city situated near the sea, fortunate especially because of its good climate, and because of its abundant commodities, and moreover, having an illustrious name for piety. He was a man who won over all inhabitants not so much by his good will and leadership of the people but by his simplicity of habits and purity of life. Indeed there was no one else who practiced all the virtues according to God, and he was much esteemed by all as a man most gentle and most holy, as someone who manifested Christ Himself through everything that he said, everything that he did, and through the miracles he wrought—for indeed already it was

believed that because of the superiority of his unsurpassed excellence he worked miracles. It was said at least that he had even brought back to this life someone who had left it, delivering him by prayer from the strength and power of death.

Well, then this man who was so outstanding <was noted by> a certain pious and holy little lady who came from a good family, and she made him the heir of the property she had inherited for him to be able to distribute the wealth left to him appropriately and in a way pleasing to Christ, and without making a profit for his own household. And thus he stumbled into the following situation.

Among those who lived in the household of the emperor, <there was> a certain eunuch, powerful and not at all falling short in malice—Eutropios was his name. When he had learned of the dear old woman's end and to whom the legacy of her wealth had fallen in the end, straightway he began to be flooded with anger and envy—for indeed the race of semi-barbarian half-men/half-women is always money-loving, envious, and very greedy. He appealed to the emperor and attempted through a royal writ to keep Menodoros far from the inheritance and to siphon off the wealth to himself. And he attempted to do so in this way. First, he persuaded the emperor to decree that a woman may never use as heir a cleric unrelated to her, and then he made this law apply to everyone, but Menodoros was actually the one referred to, the one targeted, and the one threatened.

Having accomplished this, he sent forth soldiers of the city to apprehend the bishop now liable as one who had both broken the law and leapt upon the goods of others. And Menodoros was led off as a choice prize taken from the enemy. Eutropios, exacting his due was thundering at him, putting pressure <on him>—<as you might

expect> from a eunuch, a greedy person, a servant of the emperor, and Eutropios on his own. <For> among those who were notorious for wickedness and unlawful power Eutropios was the most conspicuous by far, and indeed he seemed so to everyone.

Therefore, in spite of all this, the Martyr put a stop to this battle (so difficult and so grievous) because of her good will and remembrance of the things Menodoros had done for her when he was presbyter, acolyte and a person always living worthily in her eyes. And this is how she released him:

The martyr came to him when he was dejected, wailing, praying, and calling out to her for aid after Christ and said that there would be no other way for him to be released from this trouble, storm, and mighty wave stirred up by such great power, except by the instructions of a certain lawyer—<being> of such and such an appearance, she sketched the man to him in words—who would meet <him> at daybreak by the sacred portals of the church. Arising from his couch, he <Menodoros> ran and beside the portals of the church wide awake he found the one whom a dream had recommended. Atalantios was his name, who was at that time distinguished among the orators, but eventually also among bishops.

Speaking with him and hearing what he must do, he took heart and went forth to engage the monster in battle. He turned the lion into a cowering beast, the eagle into a crow having captured it with its own feathers. “The law of the emperor,” he said, “means that it is not permitted for women to make clerics their heirs; however, I,” he said, “am not a cleric but a chief of clerics!” There is another law that draws a distinction between a cleric and a bishop and that one <refers to> the latter, and the other to the former.

And although Atalantios, having equipped and emboldened him by these legalisms, had made him prevail in the war without difficulty, it was clearly the Martyr who was present and near at hand in these events, making all these powerful and irrefutable arguments, so that Eutropios, who appeared to thunder somewhere from the clouds, was more easily destroyed than a spider, and <so that> he <Menodoros> be delivered from this unlawful judgment in a satisfactory manner.

Neither should we leave unmentioned the other miracle that was accomplished through him and for him, one that is older than the one just related, but one that is also fitting to demonstrate the power of the Martyr. While this man was still in the registry of the church (I refer to the church near Seleucia, of Thekla), due to some need, he <Menodoros> was sent by the bishop of the church at that time—<namely> Symposios, a remarkable and godly man—to the imperial city of Constantine. Since he was a stranger he took a room in a very large house. As this house would soon burn down in an unprecedented blaze, the Maiden warned him of this, as is customary for her <to do>, and advised him to change lodgings. The advice was scarcely spoken, and the move completed, when it burned and was reduced to ashes. The martyr was praised, celebrated in song, and well spoken of throughout the great imperial city. And for this prophecy, Menodoros received from the emperor a reward (which is the present church), a place of justice and right from of old; for the sake of this property—as they say—he had actually been sent to the emperor.

Miracle 10

Since Symposios has been mentioned, it would not be good to pass over in silence the following miracle, since it is most certainly a very great one and worthy of the Martyr.

On the walls of the *neos* of the Martyr—the one facing the inner second gate of the holy enclosures (*periboloi*) and leading to the *neos* itself, the holy <things>¹¹²⁹ and the virgins' quarters—are inscribed words <made> of fine gold *tesserae*¹¹³⁰ proclaiming to all the people the consubstantiality of the holy and most high Trinity.

Since he was still an Arian and a bishop elected by bishops of the same persuasion, Symposios ordered that this inscription be obliterated since it was not in accord with their abominable <beliefs>. The one ordered to do this took up a hammer and chisel; and throughout the entire day he struck and scraped at it trying in every way to break up these words. But the inscription of the blessed profession-of-faith he in no way disturbed or marked nor, as Homer said,¹¹³¹ even scratched, since clearly her undefiled, pure, and immaculate hand was watching over and guarding the inscription like a royal seal, as the foundation and safeguard of the whole faith, of the very *neos* itself, and of human nature. In the end, as he was attacking the divine inscription, that man himself fell from the ladder; he was crushed quite badly and with his feet he paid the penalty for his audacity. Symposios immediately converted from his base doctrine, began to speak out, to breathe, to confess, to proclaim publicly and openly what the inscription that earlier he had opposed taught—the consubstantiality of the Trinity.

Come now, change course! as Homer says,¹¹³² and this is what I must do and move on to other miracles—not to all of them, but to as many as I can. In fact, it is

impossible to find them all and to relate them once found. Just as it is impossible to declare how many snowflakes fall upon the earth when God sends snow, so is the number of Thekla's miracles incalculable. For neither has she ceased nor will she ever cease to work miracles, because she is good and always bending down to each of those asking, <and> these supplicants are all of humankind—all nations, races, cities, villages, farms and households—all people pray to the Martyr, along with their local martyrs and indeed before all they call on her. And for those who cannot be present and come to this *neos*, who call upon her in whatsoever places they are, obtain aid as readily as if she were present and learning <of their needs>. For nothing constrains her grace and power to go everywhere and to listen to all—neither mountain, nor plain nor sea, nor any number of posting stations, nor rising rivers, nor lakes overflowing over much of the earth, nor the Maeotian swamp,¹¹³³ nor the columns of Herakles, nor great Ocean himself who bounds the earth below and above us. And so we must proceed to that which is possible and as much as is possible. I think that the Martyr herself, she who has moved me to this very work, will assist me yet again.

Miracle 11

If we do not now call to mind the miracle concerning Aurelios, we would disrupt the established order, if indeed it is necessary to put priests with priests and spiritual children with spiritual fathers. Aurelios was in the latter category of the aforementioned and was a fellow citizen of the last cited <Symposios> and, I think, also a relative. While Aurelios was still young and in the first years of his life, he was struck by a condition to which the name “scrofula” has been given by the physicians.¹¹³⁴ The scrofulous tumours

had encircled the neck of the child and were gradually swelling also into an immense tumour which was always increasing in height and width; this tumour indeed would have soon choked him. The condition had been variously treated by the skill of the doctors, yet despite all of this, they were defeated by the malignancy of the condition. Thereupon “the best and finest Sarpedon,” as he is called, was solicited by the grandmother of the child, as a *daemon* would be invoked by a woman still pagan, but he either could not suggest a method of therapy, or he was completely silent, or indeed—as was customary for him—he tricked the woman and sent her away unsatisfied, having set forth either a riddle, or a tale, or nothing at all.

But the Martyr, she who is truly a helper, she who offers genuine assistance, she who is always eager to give aid in everything good, after mocking the old woman, she then took pity on the child as her own foster-child <as it were>, and a son of pious parents, as was customary for her, and quickly brought forth the remedy. Bypassing everyone else, she appeared to the old woman herself, partly because she was the caregiver of the boy, and partly to mock her, I think, because of the *daemon* whom she honoured. Having arrived on the spot, she also immediately revealed the cure. She said “O my dear old lady, take some soft wool, and spin some to the measure of the standing height of the child, starting from the head and ending at the feet, and then having burnt it and mixed the ashes from this together with the medication”—which she explained to her in turn—“plaster this on the afflicted part of the neck and you will deliver the little boy from this terrible condition.” And having said these things, she departed like a dove—as a poet would say.¹¹³⁵ And after hearing these words, the old woman stood up. And indeed by her <Thekla’s> appearance alone she had recognized who had been there and

proffered these words, for, indeed, by her posture and physique, the saint looked very like the mother of the child, her daughter who was also called Thekla. She was distressed and irritated by the apparition, because she had not received this information from her *daemon*, but, nevertheless, to spare the child, she executed the prescription.

From what follows, one might be amazed at the tenacity of the condition and the efficacy of the assistance. For when the medicine was applied in the manner the Martyr had prescribed, the scrofula withdrew from that part where the medication also was, and went towards another location on the neck, and again when the medicine also was changed to that place, the scrofula too went away to that other place again. And so after that it was just like a chase between hounds and deer, with the one chasing the other fleeing, until the excellent doctor, whoever he was, after preparing the medication in a large amount (this also at the direction, I think, of the Martyr), covered the entire neck with it and forced the obstinate scrofula to go down towards the stomach and from there passed away from the bottom. And we know this from the very one who suffered and was healed, since he often recounts <this story> and praises the Martyr for the <healing> that he experienced.

Miracle 12

Since the miracle involving myself happened once perhaps, plus a second and a third, I blush to relate it, lest someone charge me for boasting and lying; but nevertheless I will speak, focusing on the Martyr herself who healed me. A certain condition is called anthrax by the doctors; it causes a high fever and inflammation and from these symptoms the name anthrax¹¹³⁶ came about. Many times it has brought death to those suffering

<from it>. This <condition> I had in one of the fingers of one hand, the one immediately after my thumb, and both the doctors and I were very afraid that the infection might spread through my entire body and endanger my life as it was especially malignant. And in the meantime, they were using the available medications in an attempt to soothe the malady and to ease the terrible and unrelenting pain—but as this evil was stronger than their skill and the remedies, they decided to combat the infection by the scalpel and to amputate the finger and so grant salvation to the rest of my body. Otherwise it would not be possible to survive. They decided on this procedure, but I, full of terror and tears, had a dream. It was still night, half-way between the decision <to amputate> and the amputation itself. Having just fallen asleep at the break of dawn when the night is still giving up its turn and day is beginning, when it seems the two are mixed together, darkness with light, and light with darkness, behold, I saw many fearsome wasps brandishing their extended stingers like spears against me. I also saw the Virgin coming in to where I was sleeping. I seemed to be sleeping in the atrium of the church—the one in which is the font and water gushing over it and the plane-tree at the base of which water also flows forth. After Thekla had entered and seen the war of the wasps against me, she took the corner of the cloak that covered her head and the rest of her body and she waved it around with her hand in order to scare away, to destroy, and to trample by foot the large swarm of wasps and to free me from all those terrible enemies. Indeed this was the vision that manifested itself to me. And as the day now appeared and was beginning to give light, I was delivered from those fierce pains and sufferings, so that I smiled and was encouraged at the blessed vision, while the doctors, on the other hand, arrived with haste and with their scalpels in hand and were consulting with one another—

as is their custom—but the same doctors went away marveling at and hymning the Martyr with me, and perhaps blaming her a bit since they went unpaid because of her visitation and medical treatment. So this was the miracle and its result.

The one I am about to relate next also happened concerning me, but I fear lest in any way it raise doubts for some since it is very extraordinary and out of proportion to my worthlessness. Well, I shall recount it nonetheless.

This youngster Basil (how he became bishop and seized control of the church, unworthy as he is, even of the stage, I will leave aside for now) began to resent me from <the very moment of> his most evil election—for, to put it briefly, alone or with very few others, I actively opposed the evil and ruinous votes for him as not having holiness or justice or sanctity; and since then he is always plotting against me in every way. And indeed once he fabricated an accusation (may God seek retribution for this from his head!) and he excluded me from the divine mysteries <the Eucharist>; it is the rule to exclude those who are truly sinning.

I will relate the premonitory vision concerning this when I was about to be victimized by this wretched youth. It seemed that a dark, paltry fellow, full of darkness and trouble, from among those who are always going around the streets of the city to receive something from those accustomed to be charitable—Zamaras was the name of this Ethiopian—approached me as I slept and held out to me what is customarily called by us a *trimision*, since it is a third of an entire *stater*. This <coin> was also dark and jet black, or <at least> it seemed to be dark. I received it, I confess reluctantly and without pleasure, for indeed to me the dream did not seem to be a sign of anything good. The dream stopped at this point, just at daybreak.

And while I, vexed, was still pondering the things concerning this vision, this white Zamaras (for indeed, except for skin colour—because one was dark, the other, white—the two of them were similar in every respect, and especially in regard to their drunkenness) passed a sentence of excommunication on me without an accuser present, for there was none, and without witnesses coming forward, for there was nothing for which witnesses might be sought. But he brought the charge against me nevertheless, employing some vicious and base denunciation—for I will not lie. After this transpired there was a great uproar and murmuring throughout the church <body> and throughout the city, for all were astonished by the shameless and extraordinary deed; my friends and all in authority were downcast, all those who knew the circumstances concerning us.

And Thomas, a holy man dear to God, since he had a high regard even for beggars, who are also of special interest to God, in no way bore lightly the judgment against me emanating from an unjust and treacherous mind. And going immediately into the council concerning us, he kept crying out against Basil and Euboulos, rebuking their ridiculous plotting against me, their stupid lying, their inept slander, their shameless wickedness, in some way subtly denouncing also the dishonour and loathsome behaviour of Euboulos and <suggesting> that, in their desire to obscure things concerning him, they fabricated these charges against us. So in the midst of this commotion, with my relatives and friends already arming themselves against Basil and Euboulos, and planning to take some vigorous action against them, I, nevertheless, restrained them from their anger because there was a need rather for reason and persuasion. And after having praised God in these matters, I recalled the vision concerning Zamaras—that it was a symbol and a forewarning of these present events, and that the evil was already about to abate. Indeed,

already for two days I had been under the excommunication, night was falling and many times I had shed tears before God, many times I had called upon the Martyr for help, and being a bit drowsy after my prayers—how can I relate this awesome and blessed sight?!—the Martyr stood before me in the form of a young girl with a white, threadbare cloak that went round from her back and crossed her breasts had been pinned at the other shoulder with a brooch, and taking my right hand, she placed in it that <the communion wafer> which Basil had taken away wickedly, without a doubt, and she uttered the following to me: “Take, Child, and cheer up. Know that I am now hastening to Macedonia to help a woman in danger <there>”—for she added these words to the other ones already spoken. And having said these things, she departed for she seemed indeed like someone in a hurry—and I, having stood up, found that my hand had been filled with some extraordinarily sweet odor, and so I was cheered and said immediately to those of my friends surrounding me, “Today, even if he doesn’t wish to, Basil will lift the excommunication.” And indeed this is what happened—for when the third day had arrived, Basil summoned me and cancelled the sentence against me, since the Martyr (without being seen and as it was her custom to do) pressured him even against his will to this. And these things—I mean the foul work of Basil and the miraculous work of the Martyr on my behalf—stopped at this point—but now my narrative must return to what I was conscripted long ago <to relate>.

Miracle 13

There was a general named Saturnilos, from whom is descended in the third generation the present-day Saturnilos who slew Severus, the impious, the wretched, the

thrice-cursed, for the intemperate drunken violence and insolence (which he displayed against the holy and sacred sites) <and for> the defilement and common pollution <which he loosed against> the world; <the same Saturnilos> who freed the churches from a sacrilege so enormous and so abhorrent. But “Why should I recall what should not be spoken?” Obeying this wise Euripides,¹¹³⁷ I will keep silent. And so our Saturnilos was a believing, well-born, and well-renowned man. Sent by the emperor with a great army at the height of its strength and “breathing a warlike spirit”—as someone speaking poetically¹¹³⁸ might say—he came to the aid of the entire East, in distress and being plundered by our neighbouring bandit-ridden country <that was> pursuing like an avenging fury everything because of which it is unfortunate and angry [i.e. the neighbouring country, like an avenging fury, pursued everything it lacked and for which it felt the need]. And so he <Saturnilos> arrived here and demonstrated in many ways his great devotion to and faith in Christ. And more than one time as he headed into war, the Martyr protected him with her presence and assured his victory every time. Once she even revealed and made known to him beforehand an ambush and a trap prepared by these same brigands, so that Saturnilos, aware of the plan ahead of time, protected himself from the disaster and redirected the danger to the initiators themselves, so that no one was left to make known their misfortune. For this miracle even now we can see many thank-offerings that he dedicated to the Virgin; having profited by her grace and power by the clearest possible proof, he adorned her *neos*. And now, as often as one might see these things one calls to mind the miracle and the one given grace and marvels at the Virgin for her strength, her astuteness of mind, and her good will towards those who love

her, and considers blessed the one for the help and foresight the benefit of which he reaped from the Martyr on every occasion.

While I am yet dazzled by the radiance of this miracle, another brilliant miracle—that happened before—stuns me by its beauty and persuades me to move on quickly to it because it is beautiful, because it is attractive, and because it is so much more able than the other miracles to charm the listener and to herald more brightly the grace and power of the Martyr. And so let us not delay but rather grant speed to this miracle desiring to spring forward. And indeed what is it?

Miracle 14

A well-born and eminent man whose name was Hypsistios, and whose city was that of Claudius <Claudiopolis>—indeed our neighbouring city—this man was formerly an enemy of Christ and a friend of *daemones*, sparing no blasphemous or impious word or deed. A dear lady adorned by her temperance and tranquility of manner and especially by her faith in Christ, sprung from a similar and notable family, lived with him. But although riches and luxury and every comfort were available to them, the woman was disgusted <by them>, suffered terribly <and> was always downcast and tearful; yet nothing distressed her other than the unbelief of her husband. And so always running off to the *neos* of the Martyr, she imitated the carriage of Hannah¹¹³⁹ who is of such great fame in the Holy Scripture: her posture, her prayers, her tears, and her perseverance in her prayers and entreaties, but not for the sake of having children—the request of Jewish vulgarity—but so that she might see her husband a Christian and a believer.¹¹⁴⁰ The martyr was attentive to these prayers, and admiring her for her faith, and as much as

pitying her, in quite a general-like fashion she advanced against him as if against a reckless enemy. First she wrapped him in a severe sickness and weakened the baseness and harshness of his spirit; then she introduced the remedy. And she introduced it in a way that would really strike the hearers <of it> with amazement, for it was something more paradoxical <contrary to all expectations> than the preceding miracles.

When he was confined to his bed, battling with many kinds of sickness, burning with the fire borne of impiety, and the time of his illness was already long, and when every doctor and every house servant had given up on him, and when his wife had become worn out indeed by prolonged lack of sleep from bedding down on the floor and by the bad humour of the patient—for the term of a lengthy illness often produces ill humour—the expectation from every quarter was of death. And what transpired, what happened?

It was high noon and the sun was riding the middle of the sky when the Martyr approached the sick man, in reality, not a dream, in her own form and not in some other shape, a young girl, slim and not very tall, lovely of countenance, dignified, stately, gracious, pale with a blush—for the colours of the body competed with those of virtue yet to be revealed. Far beyond everything else, however, the beauty of her chastity endowed her with modesty, with grace, with sparkling eyes, and the radiance of the remainder of her body glistened under the dark clothing, and seemed to shine like the sun through a delicate, purple veil. For she was dressed as a virgin and as the rule for the holy handmaids of Christ, but she radiated a kind of heavenly and divine light so that human nature and at the same time angelic nature seemed to be fused. and from the mixture of the two a kind of an image seemed to be formed—godlike, pure, and living! And so, in

this shape, she came inside the bedroom and sat down beside the bed that was supporting the sick man, and made a small noise with her foot. Hypsistios noticed and, supposing her to be one of the household women, shouted and asked who she was and why she desired to annoy him at this moment—for the sick are hard to please because of their helplessness—and taking up his challenge, immediately she said—“I am Thekla the Martyr of Christ who is constantly being insulted and maligned by you. I am here now so that I may rid you at the same time of both unbelief and sickness. For I am by nature disposed to answer insults with gifts such as these. And so since you have learned who I am and have already a suitable penalty for your unbelief, arise, go, be baptized, approach the sacraments, worship, confess the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the uncreated and consubstantial Trinity, the author of all these things, whether conceived in the mind, or perceived <by the senses>, seen or unseen, the one who sustains and directs the universe, the one who manages and rules all. Confess in addition to these <tenets> the coming with flesh <Incarnation> and sojourn of the Only-Begotten (I mean “the flesh” from the Virgin and Theotokos Mary), and also the birth, the cross, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension, and straightway you will be healthy, both in your body and in your spirit, and you will dwell happily in this land, and you will live happily, and happily you will be translated to heaven and with great confidence you will then see Christ the King.”

And having said these things she again departed to the place befitting her. Unnoticed by him she breathed out <into him> some <kernel> of salvation and of strength and of grace. All <these things> happened to him together at one and the same time, the faith, the grace, the initiation, and in addition to all these blessings he was made well and healed and <was able to> discern beautiful things and to enjoy truly noble things

of which the most excellent is to become a Christian and, after having lived a very long time in faith, to be translated from this life with the hope, which belongs to us all, of the resurrection.

Miracle 15

What is still possible to hear told even now by the Cypriots, I shall also relate. A member of the nobility and of the believers embarked one time on a merchant ship, and hastened to the Martyr, intending to pray to her and desiring to see the festival that the citizens and fellow residents of the Martyr conduct every year and that all people honour. After he had anchored at the landing point for Isauria here and had disembarked, he immediately took the road and route to the *martyrion* along with those whom he had brought along with him—his wife and children and household servants.

And also the majority of the sailors, if not all—because of their desire <to visit> the holy festival—followed, and left the guarding of the ship to only two young lads and to the season itself, for there was no reason to suspect difficulties from bad weather, and there was the appearance of complete safety on every side—for it was still summer, and the cicadas sang, the waves were silent and a calm along with a gentle breeze smiled upon the sea. And suddenly from somewhere a great, fierce gale bringing darkness struck and stirred up the whole surf from the deep, piling wave upon wave, and as the first waves crashed upon the beach and rocks, others were still breaking while others forming from somewhere within the middle of the sea surged forth, just like gigantic mountains towering over very high mountains. And after seizing the ship now totally helpless and cutting its cables <the gale> cast it forth into the middle of the sea along with the two

young lads just wailing and lifting their hands to heaven and anticipating the death that was swimming towards them, unable to do anything or to be helped in any way.

In the midst of these events, while the wind was thrashing the sea, behold, the Virgin appeared upon the ship that was storm-tossed and already about to sink, and commanding the now despairing lads to take heart, she grasped the rigging, pulled the cables, hoisted the canvas and rebuked the storm, doing what befits sailors and pilots, and also that which befits an apostle and martyr who holds unlimited power.

And thus, having lulled the storm to sleep, she set the ship upright, and anchored it at the very place from which in the beginning the believing and admirable man had set out <on his pilgrimage route> so that his household members who had gone off to the festival saw the ship and were stupefied and questioned the lads and learned everything that had happened with the storm and the Martyr; and how she retrieved and brought back the ship from the sea and anchored it again at the very place from which the storm, being stronger than the anchors and cables, had broken it away.

The result was that the island of Cyprus was full of this miracle, and our town of Seleucia did not remain in ignorance of the incredible event, because the lads related everything here and there, <while> those who were participating in the festival—the full complement of the ship—were ignorant of such a great thing, and had celebrated, as is fitting, with pleasure, but had returned to find the ship, and to hear of the miracle, and to sail homewards, hearing and relating these stories with great joy, admiring and praising the Martyr for all this. But the Martyr who so readily provided assistance to those tossed at sea did not demonstrate power less readily to those who faced dangers while journeying on land; this power indeed has manifestly performed also that kind of miracle.

Miracle 16

A certain Ambrosios, a soldier of the city, often traveled through the world by horse on urgent occasions demanding speed, whether to announce some urgent matter to the king or to deliver orders from the king to his subjects, or to carry something very valuable and costly. At this time he was transporting a great deal of goods that he had collected; he needed <to take> the road that extends through Cilicia and Cappadocia. And this road was infested even up to the palace itself by numerous and implacable enemies who were ambushing travelers for this very reason to strip them of their money and in the end either cut their throats or hand them back over to their households for ransom. Thus although that road was dangerous, he nevertheless started off on it fully expecting to suffer one of two <catastrophes>, either to be captured and to be in the hands of the enemy or to suffer punishment for the delay. It was in no way to his dear mother—as Homer somewhere says¹¹⁴¹—that he addressed many prayers with hands uplifted, but to the servant and martyr of Christ, and thus he set out upon the road and met with this miracle.

Along this most fearsome and bandit-infested portion of the road where there was great fear and the danger was evident, he saw a column of armed soldiers and cavalry following and accompanying him. Guarding and attending him, they fulfilled the need for and function of protectors and bodyguards. This was, you see, the work of the Martyr that thus appeared to him and to his enemies; to him it granted no small assurance, but upon the enemy it cast great fear. Indeed what supplied courage to him created great fear in them so that Ambrosios, having been kept safe from that point, reached the palace, and

began to shout aloud <the news of> the miracle to those present, hymned the worker of the miracle, and celebrated her especially as a helper, as an ally, and as a protector. For the Martyr did not let it escape notice who at that time was the guard and escort, or rather who had arranged for an armed force <which seemed> to materialize at that time to provide an escort.

Miracle 17

If we fail to mention Leontios and the miracle concerning him, I think that we shall be committing an impious deed, committed by us who still feast our eyes on the marvels of his art throughout the holy *bema*; for indeed the arrangement of the marble plaques interspersed around the walls and the variegated beauty of the pavement that little by little converges into one are the work and labour of his hands.¹¹⁴² Now this man also designed and executed a similar creation in a house of one of the wealthy people at Antioch, that beautiful and large city.

He was working alone with many others at a great height on the walls, taking great pains, when somehow the scaffolds that supported their feet in midair in place of pavement and provided the work with safety, collapsed. He fell along with everyone else but he alone of all was saved, although his leg was so badly broken that he too was numbered among the dead. This then very greatly grieved Maximinos, who was master of that house and who paid a great deal of attention to the man, no more so for his skill than that he was good-hearted, very fine and peaceful.

And as the time passed and the suffering increased with the hope of healing nowhere in sight, Leontios begged leave from Maximinos to go to this city of ours,

Seleucia, and to the *martyrion* of Thekla. And he gave consent, but smirking about it as an old-fashioned thing, this story concerning the Martyr—for the man was still among the unbelievers.

Leontios arrived and went up to the *martyrion* using the hands and feet of others. And barely three days had passed when Leontios was delivered from the suffering and his leg regained strength; moreover, the shattered bone was reconstructed. He returned to Antioch running and walking unhindered, and towards him whom he was eager to see, running quickly towards Maximinos.

Upon seeing him, Maximinos was struck, it is said, not by the miracle alone, but also by its rapidity, and for this very reason he became a Christian, precisely the outcome for which in her foresight the Martyr worked the miracle, so that she might remind him of the ill-advised smirk and lead him to Christ.

Moreover, the Martyr worked the miracle in the following fashion: for it is not right to be silent concerning the manner of the therapy since it also is of some interest. For it was night and Leontios, upset at <the idea of> not walking freely, was sleeping in the *neos*. And the Martyr made a visitation; she said nothing nor showed herself, but stepped with her own foot on the leg that had been hurt, and quite forcefully indeed, so that Leontios in great pain suddenly jumped up and stood and then for the first time walked, and ran. Thus expeditiously delivered from his suffering, he immediately set out for Antioch—on the land route—after saying “farewell” many times to the sea, to ships and to waves.

Miracle 18

This same miracle was performed also for two other women: one who was named Aba from the city of Seleucia, of an illustrious and famous family; the name of the other was Tigriana, from the city of Tarsus, also of an illustrious family. But the latter of these was a Christian, and while traveling from Tarsus and hurrying to the Martyr herself, she fell off her mule and broke her leg. And making many complaints against the Martyr as if she were the cause for her suffering this <injury>, she experienced the following miracle. And the Martyr with no delay whatsoever made a visitation by night; she did not order her to do this or that, nor to use this medicine of that, but only to rise up from her bed and to walk to whatever place she was heading for without any delay, since the normal shape and strength of her foot had returned again. The woman arose, as if she did not believe in such a miracle and she tested her foot, but then receiving that which was contrary to her expectation, she did not mount her mule again at all, but walking with praises and prayers and hymns, she reached the *neos* of the Martyr. At one and the same time she both rejoiced at the miracle, and tested it for herself by the length of time and of the journey whether this was perhaps not a dream but a true vision. For every miracle of the Martyr is and will be true, authentic, and complete.

Aba on the other hand was still a pagan, neither loathing the Jews nor avoiding the Christians; she was undecided about all people and all matters. And so she too fell from a mule and so was badly wounded in her leg; the broken bone pierced the flesh around it on the foot forcefully, went through to the outside so that the damage appeared to exceed <any> remedy thereafter. Over the course of time, the trouble worsened and she was immobile. At one time some of the Jews, at another time some enchanter

together with the excellent Sarpedon toyed with her, promising a cure or even doing something but unable even to do anything and in the end they were ineffectual. And so, acting either upon the advice of others or upon her own advice, the woman was transported to the *naos*. She besought the Martyr with tears <and> with many voluble laments to win over the Virgin. Not even three whole days had passed when the woman, on her own two feet, walking, descended, no longer needing a helper, and went <towards her> home with sprightly step, so they say. What kind of medication was used for this therapy? Surely you wish to know this as well! It was nothing expensive, or complicated, nor an ingenious invention of the quackery of the Asclepians. For the Martyr said, “Scraping off the grime from the surrounding latticework in my chamber, plaster it on the affected part of your foot and immediately you will stop the suffering, and you will use your feet for what one ought to use feet.” And <the Martyr> spoke; so <Aba> acted; and indeed the miracle is proclaimed still to the present day by her and by those who saw her walking, running, and being active with her foot. Better still is that she became a Christian as a result of this miracle and such a Christian as is befitting one after such an experience. The cure for the foot also caused a similar cure to blossom forth for her spirit, and so both <cures> resulted from the one miracle.

Miracle 19

Let another woman come into our midst; let her relate her miracle, and let her move us all once again to amazement. A certain Bassiane—for this was her name—from among these noble women of the Ketis¹¹⁴³ <Isaurians> was a hostage among us because of certain covenants that promised peace instead of plundering, by holding surety in any

case in that woman's person. She persevered in her devotion most of the time and she kept importuning the Martyr, partly as a Christian and partly because she was praying to be released from the obligation that was currently tying her down.

Sometime in summer, when as a result the sun was particularly fierce, she was passing time in the *neos* of the Martyr according to her custom: crying, singing psalms, praying and whatever one does who is distressed and praying. When night had arrived and the heat had intensified, she grew irritable at first, not being used to this, and she was at a loss <as to what to do>, plagued by shortness of breath, and drenched with sweat. Sometimes she tossed and turned upon her pallet, always trying to alleviate the discomfort of her body and revive it from the heat. At another time, having leapt up from her bed when she was already completely drenched besides, she would press herself against the marble for it was cooler and could refresh her. Finally, when she was overcome by the horror—actually the bulk of her stomach (for she was swollen with child) distressed her and also the intensity and unfamiliarity of the heat did not allow her to ignore <it>—she rushed to one of the nearby cisterns, one that was deep and filled with water, so as she might plunge in, bathe in it, and even drown in it, for this at any rate was going to be the outcome of the evil.

But the Martyr appeared and by taking hold of her garment, checked her rush and severely rebuked her on account of her recklessness. Summoning a certain girl who had accompanied her as an attendant, she <Thekla> said, “Bring me this basin,”—the one the girl seemed to be carrying in her hands. So she brought it and it was full of water. And the Oh So Gentle One <Thekla> dipped her finger and moistened it in the water, and anointed her <Bassiane's> forehead and both her shoulders with it. Then she went away

leaving behind a whistling west wind—so to speak—blowing freshly upon her alone. And so it turned out that while everyone else was roasting with the burning heat, she alone passed the time as if she were in springtime in forested and breeze-swept Daphne. These things were done in reality and not in a dream. A witness of this is the son born to her, Modestos, who is famous, and still alive governing the well-named city called Peace <Eirenopolis> who relates the miracle with all possible graciousness, a cheerful man, very cultured.

Miracle 20

<I think> I would be ungracious not to call to mind that miracle. Even if the Martyr is likely to blush a bit, it is not on her own account but rather on account of the woman who solicited her grace. She was a woman typical of those who are especially lucky and, because of wealth, arrogant on account of a spouse who was a general and a very powerful man. This man was Vitianos, proud of having routed the Persians. As <she thought> she was being wronged by her husband in respect to the marriage-bed, jealous beyond proportion, and liable to suspect the behaviour of her husband in regard to his straying among other women and <even> loose women, she approached the Martyr, greatly grieved, crying, cursing, and uttering imprecations, but not against her spouse, for although he grieved her, he was <still> desirable to her, and a husband is an esteemed possession, but against those servant girls on whose account Vitianos was excited and forced to neglect her.

So what did the Martyr do? She did not turn away the prayer nor did she despise the improper despondency, but saddened somewhat because of the marriage which was

being trampled on and insulted by the disgusting fornication, she granted the grace immediately, correcting the behaviour of the man, and she transferred properly to his wife the desire which he had harboured improperly for those women, not by changing any of his body parts for better or worse, but rather <by compelling> the man's soul to see what is upright and holy, and to hate his impious debauchery, and to respect the lovely and just state of marriage.

It has to be admitted that this excellent woman with so many lovely children and past her prime could not endure to remain a widow with Vitianos' children but before our eyes she substituted Gregorios in place of the general and Persian-slayer, choosing <instead> a wandering man, a foreigner, a healer of horses and mules and living with him even now. Her reason for this is not proper for me to express nor is it proper for you, those hearing <the story>, to learn.

Miracle 21

Let us move on then to the working of another miracle, one that also concerns itself with a woman, and it happened as follows. There was a wedding, wedding dancing, and celebration. The *thamos* had been fittingly adorned, and the bedroom [itself] colourfully decorated. The decoration was of gold and silver, adornments in and of themselves. All the clothing was embroidered, delicate, and valuable. There were many items collected from many <people> in beautification for the escorting of the bride.

Thither then a thief, a proverbial Eurybatos,¹¹⁴⁴ launched an attack into the wedding chamber, and filching the finest piece of woven work, he departed. This piece was a girdle, a great treasure and extremely precious, for the girdle was of gold and

sparkling gems, the gold functioning as a garment, joining a “setting,” with the brilliant stones like stars flashing in a circle, some shining from one direction and others from another. It was of sumptuous beauty blended from a multitude of variegated rays.

And so, then, this item of such beauty that excellent fellow—whoever he was—took and carried off and buried in a certain spot, since he could not enjoy the ill-gotten gain guilt free, for fear was creeping upon <him> and so he regarded it as if he did not possess it at all.

When the crime had become known, dejection immediately replaced the dancing and gaiety; tears <replaced> the laughter, for the loss was unbearable. But when the Martyr (who observes everything and watches over everything) saw the thief, and the people in tears, and the wedding ruined, she appeared to Paula (whose daughter was being married, and whose husband Chrysermos <was> an official among the ranks of the rhetors in the administration) and she revealed the place, the spot, and the thief. And so she dispelled the dejection and restored the merriment appropriate to marriage, and, by this miracle, she honoured Paula for her faith and as someone living a life pleasing to her <Thekla>.

Miracle 22

In this miracle <Thekla> demonstrated concern also for one of her own treasures. Someone stole one of the crosses dedicated to her, and carrying it along a section of the road leading up from the town to her <sanctuary>, carefully hid it in <the hollow of> a tree. The Martyr used this act affecting herself as an occasion for laughter, as the very best thieves were not neglecting even her, as if it were possible to escape notice of her

all-seeing and divine eye. At any rate, having appeared to one of her servants and guards, she made known again both the thief and the stolen item and returned the holy cross to the place that had been stripped. For the one who plotted to have the cross, his only achievement was to be called a church robber.

Miracle 23

Who could purposely pass over the miracle concerning Pausikakos? For even though this man was counted among the poor and manual labourers, nevertheless by the Martyr he was deemed worthy of a miracle and counted at the same rank as the very powerful and well-known. Well, then, this Pausikakos at one time suffered with a malady of the eyes and became blind. This happened either as a result of the negligence or the incompetence of the doctors; and the sight that had departed from him he regained again through the Martyr. We must relate also how. Having reached not the *neos* but a spot a bit beyond the entrance of the *neos* (the name of which is the Myrtle Wood) in which the Virgin is believed and said to pass the majority of her time, he enclosed himself in that place somehow. Lamenting unceasingly, imploring unceasingly, indeed, even shouting out, he did not indeed desist until he recovered that which he had lost—the Martyr was used to enduring over and over the frequent shoutings, and she exercised forgiveness on account of the suffering. And it was recovered in this way. With the scales falling away from the inside of his eyes—as they say—thus also fell away the cloudiness that altered his pupils and the former sight returned. Those who had seen him blind for a long time now saw him seeing for a long time, working at his business, hauling boats up the river and loading them, earning his livelihood from activities that he formerly had done. And

the entire city of Seleucia (which was both his city of origin and of his residence) was witness to this miracle.

Miracle 24

I must also relate that <miracle> that escaped my mind for awhile. A small boy who had been recently weaned endangered one of his eyes by excessive crying, so much so that the malady finally exceeded medical skill. His nurse took this <child> and came down from Olba, our neighbouring city. Having ascended to the *neos*, she passed the time continually in lamentations, supplications, and tears, presenting the little lad to the Martyr, showing her the wound and praying to her not to disregard the little one reduced to so ugly, unseemly, and ignominious a state and appearance, specifically, the ruined charm of his countenance, so that henceforth his sight, the most lovely handiwork of God in humans, would be only imperfect, half-functional. What is as lovely among our body parts? What is as necessary and useful as radiant eyes that both see and shine, possessing and dispensing light equally upon all that is made? It is like the vast sky. If someone were to take away the second light <the moon>, he would do no small damage to the sky itself in regard to beauty, and he would damage the earth, taking away half of the beauty of the sky, and cutting off from the earth half of its light, that of night.

But to these things, the Martyr said nothing nor did she prescribe doing this or that. But the miracle was performed playfully rather than seriously. For something of this nature occurred in the courtyard of the *neos* itself. There is always someone who throws and scatters seeds of grain, either barley or vetch, so that these might serve as feed for the doves resident here or for the other birds as well. For indeed many and variegated are

those living here: swans, cranes, geese, doves, and indeed now even some from Egypt and from Phasis. Pilgrims bring these and dedicate them to the Martyr because they want to or because they have vowed to.

There one day the little child, unrestrained, was enjoying himself, at one point chasing a bird with laughter, and at another being chased by one of the birds, so that this was a delight to those who were watching and a source of laughter.

But one of the cranes, <apparently> because it was being prevented from eating by the child, but really because this had been arranged beforehand by the Martyr, jumped on the child, and lacerated with its beak that eye that had already suffered harm and later been blinded. And the child sobbed aloud under the blow, and the women who were present broke out in cries as if something extraordinary had happened. As for the elderly nurse, for she was nearby, she almost expired, since the malady was aggravated and any hope was thwarted. But this very thing was the treatment and the remedy for the malady for it was exactly as if the eye had been pierced by a doctor's scalpel and lanced skillfully; all the thick discharge and the mist that clouded the pupil flowed forth—<the pupil> some would say is the eye of the eye—and the eye was completely drained. The child then for the first time regained his sight and recovered the light that had been lost from his eyes so that his face in no way was disfigured and he departed perfectly restored and whole. And the miracle provided much amazement to the city and to his father and to his grandfather, of whom the former is called Pardamios, and the latter, the grandfather, Anatolios who is also a priest of the church in Olba.

Miracle 25

Since we have called to mind <miracles> specifically about eyes, we must not neglect another one that happened, close to our time. We are all familiar with what transpired, since we are the ones who have benefited by the miracle and the remedy. For an epidemic affecting the eyes fell upon this city in the past year and the summer. Because of the copious and bitter flow that ran out of the head over to the eyes, there was no room for the healers of bodies to use these “healing” remedies of theirs anymore. The stream flowing continually downwards, you see, washed off the salve applied to, or smeared over the eyelids so that the eyes were bereft of help and the doctors were full of embarrassment and perplexity, as they were defeated by the ailment or now also afflicted themselves by the same evil, for the fearsome malady affected everyone unmercifully. But the Martyr, the true healer of human kind, having taken pity on the widespread and severe suffering, opened in her *temenos* a “dispensary” and invited all without exception to come to her. By night she directed one of the sufferers and through him she made it known to all that all those struck by this illness should use her bath. For this bath was the “dispensary” which was the antidote to the sickness of the eye condition right from the very start; however, it was reinforced by the activity of the Martyr and <so> it became a most effective cure at one and the same time for the entire city, with the result that the highway over there was not sufficient for those going up in lamentation and tears, or for those coming back down with happiness and praises. They ascended with their eyes shut at the time, but descended with their eyes wide open.

It was not the grace of a poor and beggarly cistern that saved one human being—barely—but rather the grace of an abundant and most bountiful source. In fact, when all

the people stopped lining up when the flows overflowing the cisterns had stopped, the grace of the Martyr did not fail, continually receiving and healing and sending away some, then again in turn receiving and healing others, sending away everyone with the same cure. The result was that in three or four days in total, the sickness remained upon quite a small number, and they failed to obtain the general cure that was being supplied, I think, due to their unbelief or alternatively due to other vices in their lives, or so that we might perhaps understand how serious the sickness was.

For those with whom it remained, it struck with blindness; it utterly destroyed either both eyes alike or, at the least, one of the eyes. So terrible was the ailment, truly some kind of demonic scheme! But, nevertheless, it was completely defeated by the miracle and made to disappear and was out from under foot as if it had never happened in the first place.

Miracle 26

If it is necessary to remember and also to relate one of the even more extraordinary <miracles>, I shall tell this one. Dalisandos is a city, or rather now but a ghost of a city and a name discarded among the unseen and nameless, but having a certain fame itself because of the Martyr. For while honouring her magnificently it also experienced from her quite a wonderful miracle.

During this festival, the Virgin is honoured—it is illustrious, well-known, and well-attended, with many streaming to it from every direction as it were. If one keeps watch during the sacred night vigil of her feast day, standing on the summit rising up next to <the city>, having his back towards the dawn <the East> and his sight fixed on the

sunset <the West> and while in that spot remains also awake, he sees the Virgin coming high in the air in a fiery chariot and handling it herself, hastening from one of her residences to another, down from Seleucia to the *nymphēutērion*¹¹⁴⁵ that she loves, honours, and admires more than the other ones in our midst, as it is situated in a clean resting-place with every convenience. For there are many trees in it—lofty, wide-spreading, blooming on all sides, and bearing fine fruit. And in addition there are many very charming springs of especially cold water bursting forth, so to speak, from every plant and every rock that flow through and around the *neos* itself. And the breeze of the place is gently sighing and welcome; the song of birds overhead is especially amazing and quick to charm not only a person carefree already and at ease, but indeed also a person both dejected and downcast. And the grass spread over the ground is abundant and rich and colourful and provides rest to every person, to each man and woman and to children at play and grazing beasts, and even to those who wish to dance and to frolic about most joyously, and to those eager to picnic and to eat heartily. And indeed it <the spot> alone is sufficient <to restore> the sick to health. And therefore in order to attend the festival, she hastens <back> towards the region so blessed and suitable for her alone; for each year at the most blessed of hours after preparing her horses—as someone poetically might say¹¹⁴⁶—she rises from this summit <in Seleucia> and lands on that summit <in Dalisandos> and enters into the *neos*. And once she has celebrated the panegyric, and distributed to those gathered together those things that she customarily distributes and has greeted the place fondly, she returns here. It is not as if she abandoned this *neos*, for <the> eye of saints is not limited; it is not prevented from continually visiting every region, peoples, towns, and cities whatsoever and whenever they wish.

They say that the great city Tarsus also experiences this miracle when the divine Paul from the great imperial city of Rome in the same way visits that place, and in this way he especially honours his city, his sanctuary and his panegyric, and shows to those honouring <him> that he himself is pleased by the panegyric and that he has accepted the sacred honours. And in turn, he has given the most beautiful gifts in exchange for them. And evidently the same martyr herself has rescued Dalisandos itself on many occasions from siege by appearing above the mountain ridge and flashing like heavenly fire into the eyes of the enemy and throwing them into a panic and breaking up the siege. And indeed there are those who still remember this miracle and take pleasure in relating it.

Miracle 27

And since there has been a mention of siege, let us not overlook the miracle concerning Selinous that alone is sufficient to prove positively the power of the Martyr. Now this Selinous is a small coastal city, but was formerly great and blessed in regard to peace, enviable both then and now to its enemies, without wronging <them> in any way but vexing them because it had remained to that time unravaged and had not yet transferred possession of it into the hands of others since the sea undergirds it, encircling it like a natural moat and <it has> a perpendicular, overhanging cliff that just as a helmet tops a head, guards it and does not allow the enemy an inroad, and permits the residents to live securely without fear. But even so, so secure and unravaged on every side, once by an attack from an ill-tempered *daemon*, it was handed over to the enemy. And this is how he handed it over. For while a goatherd was grazing his herd at the summit of the cliff overhanging the city, a goat strayed away from the other goats and was going downhill

from the summit after coming upon some small, narrow, and faint path, or rather a track. For no trouble at all for these goats are the difficult and especially rugged and winding paths through rocks, those that Homer calls “towering.”¹⁴⁷ And so while the goat was escaping, the goatherd was making his way step by step and little by little and sometimes using <where possible> his nails and his hands; he kept descending, the goat continued fleeing and leading the way down, as far as the point where the goat and the goatherd arrived at the plain lying below. <And so> it happened that the formerly unknown, faint, and unperceived sloping path became known to all and to the surrounding enemies. And thus at that time the city was captured and thereafter was fearful, that <exposed to> the eyes of wicked brigands, it would be taken again and often, and henceforward the path would arouse the desire of the enemies, continually attracting those who covet what belongs to others. And so they were in a sorry state, always in anxiety of being captured. But the Martyr destroyed the very great fear of theirs having appeared to one of them on the spot and having ordered him to build a dwelling for her at the summit itself and at the beginning of that path coming from above, and no longer to be totally apprehensive of evil, since indeed the sight alone of the *neos* was sufficient to rout the enemy. And this both has happened and does happen frequently, and in fact was happening even at the time when I was writing these words. For they executed the command as quickly as possible, both building the *neos* and also walling off both the path and the enemy; and those often attempting both then and now were not undetected and with great shame withdrew. And so the Martyr demonstrates her great strength to very formidable and destructive men, and wages war not by means of an aegis or fringed shield or weapons that scare only in myths but rather by a small and insignificant *temenos*, and by it she,

like a Fury, diverts entire armies, and may you, O wonderfully-victorious and Christ-bearing Virgin, always divert <them> from those people and from us!

Miracle 28

Indeed <the saint> also performed <another> similar miracle, that nearly escaped me and slipped past me; not because I wanted it to, <but> because forgetfulness had taken hold of my mental faculties and also because I did not discover all <the miracles> at the same time, nor <did I discover them> one by one nor even all together. <Rather>, like men digging for gold, I first cleared away a lot of brushwood and earth, <so to speak> and in this way I collected systematically the miracles that had been buried by time and that had become vague through forgetfulness and somehow confused, and so were in the process of fading from memory in respect to order, location, and how they came about. Nevertheless, I must recount the miracle that I discovered after having searched for it and having tracked it down with great difficulty and effort; this miracle, performed for herself and for her *neos*, inspired in me the utmost admiration and fervor, and I found it with difficulty.

It is said concerning the *naos* she has here, that the thieves who, unfortunately for us, are our neighbours, sometimes pillage our territories in the role of bandits and sometimes appropriate everything in the function of despots and tyrants, plundering everything; once, making an incursion, they overran this *neos*, since it was full of gold and decorated with countless other riches. Thus after having helped themselves to the consecrated possessions, they returned from there towards their country Laestrygonia¹¹⁴⁸ overcome with arrogance and joy for the two following reasons: they had vanquished the

Martyr and at the same time had become rich. But after having slackened the reins a little for their audacity so that they entered, despoiled <the sanctuary>, seized the sacred treasure, carried it off, departed and escaped, the Martyr amused herself with the campaign against them in this way.

In great haste they hurried off and were fleeing back towards Laestrygonia situated to the west of us and of all of the land to the east; it was separated by many sky high mountains, the refuge of their folly indeed! She confused their sense of direction, pushing them all together without difficulty and without fuss towards the East, and the plain lying at her feet, and offered them all together to the soldiers for a ready massacre. These <the soldiers> knowing the situation, filled with both distress and divine ardor, surprised them in the place that I said was flat and convenient for cavalry, and massacred all without exception. And they did this so quickly that one day sufficed for the vanquishers to begin and end the massacre of so many men, to erect a monument, and to bring back to the Martyr her consecrated goods whether jewels or riches. And it was in striking up the celebration chorus, in dancing, in singing hymns and songs of victory that they consecrated anew to the Martyr what belonged to her, together with admiration and astonishment at how she had not endured for the slightest moment the audacity of those impious and accursed <thieves>. <O Martyr> put up with them no longer and <do> not <permit> them to extend their audacity and their folly any longer against us, your children. For our troubles are no longer bearable or tolerable; already we all are sinking into ruin and total destruction; the churches are on their knees, the cities are on their knees, the fields, the towns, and the households; all everywhere lament for themselves,

turning towards the only hope that remains: your intercession and the help of your Husband and King—Christ.

And what has just been said affords a good demonstration that the Virgin knows how to help with whatever grace and strength she possesses for the aid of those whom she should and <that she also knows> how to afflict those who afflict her—and afflict them beyond measure, especially those who, she realizes, are committing transgressions and impieties beyond measure, and who are wantonly desecrating her treasures whether spiritual or liturgical: <consider> how the enemy set up camp and how they departed without their having been permitted to leave behind anyone to tell and make known to their families their disaster. For the Martyr understands how to reward those who during their lives have performed a good deed, but she also understands how to punish the impious and those daring to commit sacrilege, imitating in this—I think—Christ the king, whose numerous kindnesses, proof of his love for men, but also the proofs of his anger against them, took place in the past and are to be found still even in our day. Here is a proof of his love for mankind: the entire city of Nineveh, with its numerous inhabitants, saved and glorified by a few tears of repentance. Conversely, a proof of his anger: the cities of Sodom and Gommorah, an entire nation, condemned to total destruction because of their incorrigible and stubborn wickedness. The deeds that I reported further back are sufficient evidence of the Martyr, but we must pass on to other evidence that will make us see her particularly in anger, responding to faults and offenses by matching to them the punishment measured out and so either bringing <people> to reason and the straight road, going so far as to rob them of life and finally even avenging herself on those whose wickedness has become entirely impossible to correct and to restrain. If you like, let us

call to mind meanwhile the miracle that happened in our own time in order that its testimony may reinforce my discourse and that those who will rise and bear witness may support me. There are not just three or four <of these people>, a meager number that could inspire mistrust, but entire cities, entire populations: those who are found close by ourselves from the East and, on the other hand, those far from us who extend from ourselves even as far as Asia. In fact, <the story of> the miracle has spread quickly through all peoples, and so also the awe and amazement created <by it>.

Miracle 29

To continue, there was a certain Marianos, bishop of Tarsus in neighbouring Cilicia, a city rejoicing in its beauty and size and also in all those things simply for which a famous and prosperous city may be known: <it also rejoices> in being the first <city> from the East to appear to those who are traveling towards the East from any place on the earth; and surely the greatest and most noteworthy <reason for rejoicing> is that it is preeminently the city of the greatest and godly apostle Paul.

And so Marianos, being by nature reckless and easily provoked, and who also was quarreling with Dexianos (who was himself then bishop of our Seleucia), was not strong enough to hold his own <against Dexianos in> any other way—for Marianos was unable to prevail against so great a man, nor on the other hand <was there the possibility> of Dexianos yielding to a man not very healthy nor of sound mind—but he <Marianos> attempted to defend himself in the end through insolence and boldness towards the Martyr. And this assuredly is the greatest proof of the man's foolishness, the undertaking of an affair so dangerous and impossible; but he attempted it nevertheless.

And indeed it was at the beginning of the feast of the Virgin, when everyone, especially the Cilicians, used to rush to us (and still do and will do as long as there are people), in honour of the Martyr, each for his spiritual benefit, so that the land is crowded and the sea is crowded with everyone, by peoples, and families, tribes streaming together to this place, <that> he <Marianos>, having stood up in his church assembly, forbade and prohibited all from visiting us and also the Martyr. And this was the ultimate threat and defense against Dexianos: to remove the customary celebration of the feast and to rob the blessing of the Martyr from the people flocking to the feast of the Martyr. But he had only just done this and he certainly paid the penalty for <his> folly or rather <for> his madness. For not even to the fifth or sixth day did this Kapaneus survive this rashness.¹¹⁴⁹ And the way in which it became clear that <his> demise was due to <the> anger and also <the> wrath of the Martyr is an appropriate subject to expound publically.

A certain Castor, an excellent man, drawing his lineage from Lycaonia but living in <our city> of Seleucia, and serving in the provincial administration, saw the following vision during the evening vigil of the panegyric: the Virgin herself with rather a fierceness of appearance, and expression, and gait, pacing about the entire city, clapping her hands quite often, and crying out against Marianos and his insolence, and threatening to exact a penalty soon. And this already was a reality, no longer a dream. For his <Marianos's> death immediately followed close upon this vision; so both occurred together at one and the same time, both Castor relating the vision and also others announcing the death of Marianos; so indeed a great trembling came upon everyone alike, not so <much> from the event, as much as from its rapidity. And this <miracle> happened in this way and concluded in this way. And now you will learn of another

miracle, not at all an inferior one; this one was also accomplished as a result of anger, but without the punishment going as far as death.

Miracle 30

Well, one of the rhetors <-serving> the administration—<that> Eusebios, who still now is famous for his good lineage, his liberal arts education, and the civility of his manners and for being fervently faithful—this man in any case greatly esteemed Hyperichos while he was alive and made much of him, (actually they originated from the same city of Damalis and Sandas-Heracles <the son> of Amphitryon, and also he was a clever man and unsurpassed in every virtue as well). And so, when he <Hyperichos> had died in our city of Seleucia, Eusebios wished to pay him great honour also in matters to do with his funeral rites. He thought no other honour greater or more splendid than this: to celebrate his funeral and to bury him in the *neos* of the Martyr. And accordingly he inquired concerning this of the great and holy man, I mean, Maximos, who was also presiding over this church at that time, to permit him to bury Hyperichos within the *neos* of the Martyr in the right *stoa* on the south side.

When the admirable Maximos had granted the man's request, even though he was put out by the man, those responsible for digging the tombs came in and set to work and began to hew the stone pavement.

And, suddenly, somehow the Martyr stood beside these men reproachful, and accusing them of insolence, lashing out at them and ordering them to depart now. But they at first did not know even who she was—for it was not <possible> for them to understand an event so extraordinary and so inexplicable—but despite that, they yielded;

but when, after halting a moment, they set to work again, the Martyr also presented herself again to them and, glaring at them this time more severely and more angrily, as is characteristic of those who are extremely angry, straightaway she knocked the wind out of them so that all their limbs trembled and shook violently—because she, the Martyr, is terrifying, not only when she mobilizes her strength, but also when she directs her gaze intently upon those who might need such a look—and so she almost would have taken their lives (with the result that other workers would be required to dig the grave) if she had not spared them out of respect for Maximos. But she also appeared to Maximos himself by night, quite reproachful, ordering him not to have such contempt for her *neos*, as to transfer to it the stench of many corpses and graves. For <she said> there is nothing in common between tombs and oratories, except in the case of some person who, although he has died, might not be <really> dead but rather living with God and be therefore worthy to live together and under the same roof with the martyrs, like that saintly Symposios, like that holy man Samos, as if some other person <could be> equal to them.

Miracle 31

And at the very moment I was writing this miracle—for it is not appropriate for me to keep silent regarding the actual appearance at that time of the Martyr to me—this is what occurred.

For some time already I had been dealing without enthusiasm with the collection and writing of these matters, I confess, and then <only> casually was I taking up my

writing tablet and stylus, as if I had already given up for the future the discovery and collection of these miracles.

And thus, while I was in this mood and yawning away it then seemed the Martyr sat down next to me in plain sight, just there where it was customary for me to consult my books and to take up with my own hand the parchment on which I was copying this text from the writing tablet.

And indeed, she also seemed to me to be reading, enjoying, smiling, and indicating to me by her expression that she was blessed with what was being written at that time and that it was necessary for me to complete this work and not to leave it unfinished until it was completely possible to learn from each person what that person knows and whatever could <be learned> with accuracy. The result was that I was filled with awe after this vision and smitten with enthusiasm. And I took up my tablet and stylus once again to continue this <work> as long as she ordered.

Miracle 32

Once <even> Dexianos gave proof of the sort of anger and reproach of which I spoke: but he was not tried for offending in the same manner, however, but by annoying the Martyr exceedingly, and indeed it was from this point, I think, I left off writing. Once the bandits, who are our neighbours and live among us, were overrunning our country and were plundering everything here and making our property a “Mysian” booty,”¹¹⁵⁰ so that even our cities were being enslaved, our villages swept away, our fields and homes flooded, and there being no escape from their inroad, their onslaught, and their fury. Dexianos—for he was still at that time <one> of the wardens and guards—took

precautions, such as a person would, lest perchance the fortifications that encircle the *neos* and the *neos* itself, since it is full of great treasure, come under the control of the enemies; <and> he took everything adorned with gold and silver, and transported it to the city as a safer and more populated place, <one> likely anyway to be <well-> protected. And in having done this, he seemed at any rate <to have done> something prudent and appropriate to the circumstances.

But when not even a full day had elapsed, and that night had fallen, the *neos* was full of uproar, tumult, and shouting, because the Martyr was striding to and fro, up and down, saying that she had been treated with contempt, as someone who is weak and cowardly, and unable to protect the *neos* or the people related to the *neos*. “For that man—Christian, priest, and my attendant, acted as an enemy towards me before even the enemy did, by stripping and robbing me as no enemy would dare!”

Some of the virgins who were then sleeping inside the *neos*, becoming aware of this <commotion> and hearing <these words> actually <spoken> by the Martyr herself, almost lost their minds with fear; and they did not wait for the break of day, but faint, pale, trembling, and with hearts aquiver, went to Dexianos and announced and described everything to him, with the result that Dexianos without any delay, sprang up to transport the treasure back from the city to the *neos*, both the consecrated and the liturgical objects, and by this he with difficulty appeased the Martyr and put a stop to this anger of hers.

Of such number and kind are <the cases> in which the punishment turned out <to be> rather mild, as many as have come to my attention at any rate; since those that have escaped <us> indeed are without limit and number. But now I must relate <those other ones> which elicited retribution more grievous and severe.

Miracle 33

It was the feast of the Martyr herself and the last day of the festival, which was customary for us to call a “holiday,” because the festival then also has its end. On this day everyone is hastening both to pray to God and to beseech the Maiden and, after partaking of the holy sacrament, to go forth sanctified even as one renewed and restored in body and spirit—citizen and stranger; man and woman and child; ruler and ruled; general and soldier; community leader and private citizen; young and old; sailor and farmer—in short, everyone without distinction who is eager to recollect more earnestly.

Among that multitude there were two men who had traveled from nearby Eirenopolis. And now, when the feast day and the religious service had concluded, these <two men> were eating together and with many others as well. Each person, as is usually the case, was struck by some <particular> aspect of the festival; one by the brilliance and joyousness of it, another by the great crowd of those who had assembled, still another by the large gathering of the bishops, and another by the learning of the preachers and another at the euphony of the psalm-chanting, another at the length of the night vigil, another at the order and arrangement of the rest of the liturgy, and another by the intensity of those praying, and yet another by the jostling of the crowd, another by the excessive heat, and still another at the accumulation and congestion of those just arriving at the awesome sacred rites, and those already leaving, of those returning again, and those leaving again, those who were shouting, those quarreling, those scuffling with one another and not giving way to one another chiefly because of the desire to be the first to partake of the holy rites.

Joining in, one of the two men also, whose name was Orention, said, "Let each of you admire what he wants of the festival, but I think that the miracle and marvel I have enjoyed is more marvelous and sweeter than all. For peering out from a spot in the *stoae* at the back of the *neos*, I beheld a girl so exceedingly beautiful, so gorgeous or even distinguished and full of charm, that the entire time of the service my eyes were directed to and fixed on her remarkable beauty, with the result that I prayed only for this to the Martyr: to enjoy her beauty and nothing else." And the talk at the table was all more or less similar.

And when night had fallen and all had gone to sleep, Orention could not escape from his thoughts of the day nor even while sleeping from similar imaginings. For it seemed, as he himself related to those present, that he saw in a vision the Martyr sitting in her *neos* on a lofty throne of some kind of beaten gold, elevated, <and> she was distributing to each of those who had come together to the festival many splendid gifts pertaining to her festival, worthy of her who offered them. In conclusion he said, "She <seemed to> look also at me and to say, "Which one do *you* wish, my good fellow, to receive from these gifts? Or do you wish for that girl after whom you are lusting, and whom you have perversely besought me to possess? Well, then, take <her> and depart. Possess and enjoy the gift." And I, overjoyed, took the gift and departed. For indeed the girl was standing there among the other <gifts> she was distributing." And the vision and the account ended at this point.

When but an hour had passed, a raging and savage *daemon* leapt upon him and tore and ripped him to pieces; and in accordance with the custom of the Persians, it flayed him of his skin and left him skinned and immediately he was filled with worms and pus.

As a result all those immediately present became completely breathless and speechless from the horrible incident that had occurred so suddenly, <so that> they almost died on the spot. So great was the evil before their eyes; and this was indeed the woman, who had been ogled wickedly and impiously by him, and who had been even more wickedly entwined <with him>, and who finally <had> destroyed the thrice-accursed man.

Less than three days passed before he was destroyed by the *daemon* and paid this penalty for his licentious ogling and for his insolence and folly towards the Virgin <martyr>. So, this drama was ignored by no one—for it is truly worthy of tragic diction—<and> even to this day that man's misfortune has remained a matter of reproach and a stigma for his descendants. As for myself, this <account> completely unnerved me and moved me to great fear, so that with trembling hand I scarcely record this dreadful miracle.

Miracle 34

Another <miracle> presents itself to me, hardly falling short of the previous one, but I think even more dreadful, yet nevertheless demanding also to be inscribed among the miracles, so that it may be a message for self-control to those reading this book, and to persuade them not <to turn> their eyes towards impious <sights>, nor to profane things, nor things unworthy of the eyes of the Martyr. On account of this I am strongly motivated—for in fact, reason requires <it> of me—and I am compelled to relate this miracle also in its turn.

Two <men> arrived together from the city <of Eirenopolis> and went up to the *neos* together, not for the sake of prayer but rather for pleasure's sake and again together

they fell into evil. For they had unjustly acquired from somewhere a gold piece—I think that it was from some <tax> paid to the emperor by those legally obliged to pay—and even more unjustly they were using this ill-gotten revenue, carousing, drinking, and acting debauched in every manner, and they <did> these things under the eye of the Virgin Martyr.

Well now, the wretches were getting breakfast for themselves in one of her gardens, when they reached the limit of the most evil indulgence. And indeed they were inflamed by excessive drunkenness, and were now on the look-out for impious action which is also the manifest outcome of drunkenness, and so at some point they came upon a virgin who was wandering about outside the sacred enclosure—and this had been prepared by the devil in order that the wicked plan might be its beginning, the punishment might be its fulfillment, and the sin, its sting—and they lured the virgin to themselves, and made her share their meal and already even the same dining couch. Here one ought to be amazed at the consequences, for the Martyr perceiving that one of her virgins had been entrapped somehow in the snares of sin, and <that> the ewe-lamb was entangled in a net between two wolves, dragged towards a pit prepared for <its> destruction, manifested herself as quickly as she could in the garden, to those men still sleeping, and had not as yet touched the Maiden—for the strong drink had put them to sleep and the sin had not had an opportunity, so that even strong drink then became somewhat of an advantage. She said, “To what purpose, you scoundrels, have you lured one of my doves from my household and into your company and wish to ruin her? As for me,” she said, “it will be my concern that you pay the penalty for such lawless insolence.”

And having said these things, she went away to her *neos* and precinct. And since they were filled with fear by the vision of her, and panic-stricken by the things they had dared and by those things they had heard, they immediately sent away the virgin, a virgin still, exceedingly thankful for their drunkenness and sleep up until then, and fleeing headlong they departed and without realizing it, in fleeing they fled not, for changing one place for another, they in fact stayed “within the arena.” A short time later, at any rate, they were apprehended for the aforementioned crime, as if by some portent—I mean the theft of the gold, which was the point of departure for their wickedness and their drinking to boot. And because of that same sin they perished and received their punishment in the same place they had profaned. In their folly, <in order to> escape punishment, they devised and then altered many routes, shortcuts and escapes; however, they were not able to escape the powerful and unsleeping eye of the Martyr, nor the manner of punishment set for them. And blaming himself many times for his rashness in all things, one <of the men> died hurling himself into this river of ours from the ferry boat which was carrying him to us, and the other, killed in a different way, also himself perished. Both knew the same time and place of destruction and, as they say, they shared the same grave and most likely the <same end> of their wantonness and sin. And this I learned from their fellow citizens, and perhaps even from their relatives. And now there remains for us a third pair from Eirenopolis, and if we shall fail to mention this miracle, we will be depriving ourselves of a very important miracle without being aware of it.

Miracle 35

A certain Pappos and Aulerios were councilors together, and partners in supplying the military. It was grain, I think, they supplied. Time was passing and the grain was being consumed because the soldiers carried it away daily in <the form of> bread. By accident, Aulerios departed this life, but Pappos made full use of his death for a plot against his <Aulerios's> children. Reserving for himself alone the profit that belonged to them jointly, he left for the children only the liabilities, with the result that their misfortune was two-fold: they were orphaned and they had lost the small amount of money still left to them. And so what <did> the Martyr do, who is never unmindful of <affairs beyond our own> boundaries, and who attends alike to all who are distressed and treated unjustly? She hurried and came to the city and even the hearth of the wrongdoer and, “a bad dream”—as Homer somewhere says¹¹⁵¹—“that stood above his head,” she said <to him>, “What is this relentless war of yours, my excellent fellow, against the orphans? And what are these false dealings of yours <that you are conducting> so shamefully against orphans? What greediness so great has consumed you that you disdain everything alike, God, and good faith, and mutual agreements, so that you make but little profit indeed that will not increase your estate but that will damage the estate of those orphans? At any rate,” she said, “know for a certainty, that Aulerios who died as your partner and because of this wrong-suffering, has approached Christ, the King of all, concerning you, and that the death-bringing pebble [vote] has been cast against you, and that, without delay, you will overtake him and on the spot you will <be required to> render account for your shared venture, and that you will surely die this same day next week.”

With these words she vanished, but he got up so rattled by fear that his entire body shook, and all its members were filled with shaking, turmoil, and trembling. Even his head was shaking, and his eyes that were already growing dim were rolling around, his tongue was hanging out, his teeth were chattering, and his heart was pounding—so wildly in fact that it seemed to be rushing out in front of the rest of his body—and his feet, as though they had to walk on some sort of loose and shifting ground, were constantly buckling.

He lasted only long enough to confess his wrong-doing, to cast aside his false dealings, and to demonstrate overdue charity, but this benefited him not at all, for the things that he did in the end rose not from resolve but rather from necessity. And when the day foretold arrived, scarcely had he risen, when he was carried off and the truth of the prophecy was confirmed by his end so that no one from our city or theirs remained ignorant of the consequence that accompanies wrongdoing.

So come, now, and move on!—for I must say the same thing again—from the more somber miracles to the brighter ones, from the more severe to the more kindly, so that humbled by fear, we may lift up our spirits and be warmed again by some sweeter and gentler accounts. And so, <the stories> we know, let us bring back into our thoughts.

Miracle 36

It was summer and the cicadas were singing and the sun was blazing intensely overhead. And a serious disease was spreading among mules, horses, cows, donkey, sheep, and absolutely every kind of livestock in existence, with the result that the calamity <left the people> helpless and preoccupied, with not only the villages and fields

being depleted but even the well-known households in the city as well. No therapy whatsoever presented itself because it was unclear just what the plague was or whence the outbreak sprang—nor was it <possible> to learn <such things> from the victims themselves—particularly because the animals died before the owners were aware <of the problem>, and because many animals indeed perished together. And because the difficulty was unmanageable and beyond human capabilities, again the generous and all-powerful martyr at that point took pity on both the livestock that was being lost and those who were losing them, and revealed the remedy underfoot.

For she provided <a spring> to gush forth abundantly, <one> not previously in existence, which had not been seen by any of us or by any of our predecessors, and she provided it not far away, not in some other region, but in the place where her very own *temenos* is. And this place is a cave <from which the spring originated> situated to the west of the *neos* itself and facing it; it is most charming and delightful and very pleasurable for walking and for passing time in, and for praying in its utter stillness, and also for obtaining through prayer what one wishes from the Martyr. And so everyone who goes into the *neos* and prays, immediately <afterwards> hastens to that cave as if to a *thalamos* and further a bridal chamber with the Virgin within. Some say that she also spends the majority of her time there, being a lover of quiet and fond of solitude. Indeed this is particularly characteristic of saints, to delight in solitary places and to reside most of the time in such places. From this spring, then, improvised thus, the Martyr poured out healing on all the sick animals.

And so, it was <possible> to see every path, and every thoroughfare, from the lowest to the highest places, facing in this direction and leading hither, teeming with

horses, mules, cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, and even dogs and pigs being driven towards this one place from which at that time gushed forth remedies and healings rather than water. And so for certain none of the creatures that drank from the water at that time left still sick, but as if it had drawn for itself health rather than water; thus each departed, able to leap again, and each running off toward its own field and home completely invigorated and fit for its usual tasks. It is said that at that time one of the elite in the city had a horse that was seriously sick, with its back drawn towards the hind part, and contracting the rest of its body the other way, and with the contractions of the sinews—as it is said—hindering its forward gait. And as a test rather than act of faith, he sent <the horse> to that water to see whether it <the water> was capable of reversing such a visible malady, nor did the Martyr fail to recognize the challenge and sent the horse back healed, to Marianos.

There is no one, I believe, who does not know this, nor that he openly spoke what was in his mind, and of the unexpected healing of the horse, and that he rejoiced beyond measure at the very clever reversal of circumstances by the Martyr.

Miracle 37

Another tale yet remains; namely that a scion of one of the noblest and illustrious Cypriot families, bereft of his sight, because of the reputation of this water, after crossing <to the mainland>, partook of the remedy, and returned again to Cyprus with his sight.

Well, then, do the stories not denounce us and shout out to the learned among men, if they alone are overlooked by us, although not overlooked in these matters by the Martyr? On the contrary, in fact, often they <the learned among men> have encountered

miracles among the wise and learned. Come, then, what we have learned thus far, let us recount in order that our <these> stories may thank us since they also have been deemed worthy of the blessed choral dance of the miracles.

Miracle 38

Now Olympios was a well-known teacher and his father, Alypios, was also a teacher and taught here at one time. At some point he fell seriously ill so that death threatened. And since the medical profession had given up and he himself regarded the evil as beyond human assistance and also every hope of life had abandoned him, he fled to the only refuge from such evils, the Martyr. Taking himself off to the *neos*, he finally depended entirely on the cure from that place. For this reason the Martyr made haste—for she is a lover of learning and the arts, and is always pleased with those men who praise her in a polished style—and delivered the man from danger. And she delivered him this way.

She paid a visit by night to him and, as is customary for her to do always in the case of those who are ill, showed herself as she really is, and she inquired immediately what it was that he suffered and what he wished. In response he said “You know. Why then should I tell this to you who know all things?” This is from Homer, but in adopting it, he spoke most appropriately—more so even than Achilles <when he spoke> to his mother Thetis¹¹⁵²—in order at one and the same time to announce his profession, and also to humbly entreat the Virgin by the loveliest and most agreeable <turn of phrase>.

At any rate, the Martyr smiled, pleased with the man and with the verse, admiring how he had answered fittingly indeed. She held forth a stone that she happened at that

time to be carrying in her hands, which seemed most beautiful and multicoloured, and not at all unbefitting the hand holding it; and she held it out to him and ordered him to bind it <around> his neck, as <an object> with the power to put the illness to flight and to bestow a cure.

Alypios received it, and while he was still asleep, he seemed to be holding onto it and clasping it very tightly in his hand, as if a pledge of life and of health, but upon awakening, he opened his hand and found nothing. And it seemed that he had been deceived and that the dream, in truth, had been <only> a dream, and <so> he added grief to his poor health. For when one hopes for something that is going to be very beneficial, but that does not materialize, one somehow experiences pain all the more sharply, and it pierces and penetrates even more the spirit of the one who has suffered.

But his son Solymios dispelled this pain and sadness by appearing a little later holding that very stone in his hand, the one that the Virgin seemed to be holding that night and to have given to the sick man. Does not the account of this miracle seem to be a fiction and but a fable? However, when you learn the circumstances of the miracle and how it came about you will desist. I think, from this most evil suspicion. This Solymios, who was dedicated to both <his> family and learning, passed part of his day in study and part with his father. In the morning he would occupy himself with literature, and then when noon came, he would go to his father, to visit and care for him and to do all the things that are appropriate for a son to do <for his father> and for a father to receive from his son.

And on his way that day following the night when the Martyr was seen, he found this stone along the road. He was delighted by its beauty and its size—for having been

ground into a sphere-shaped, symmetrical circle, so that it seemed to have been turned on a lathe, and its colours were a mix of white and purple, so that the veins were interlaced with one another, resulting in a work of extraordinary natural beauty. He picked this stone up, and toying with it while he walked, he came to his father. And as soon as he stood by his father's bed, his father noticed the stone in his <Alypios'> hand and he recognized it as the gift of the Martyr. And immediately seizing and clutching it, he was at once delivered from the long, severe illness.

But it seems to me that the Martyr had touched that stone, and because of this it was so beautiful and charming an object and now was revealed as more powerful even than death.

Miracle 39

After the teacher let us go to the scholars. I am speaking of Isokasios and our Aretarchus, each of whom, being also an unbeliever, chanced upon a miracle from the Martyr but staunchly remained an unbeliever. But responsibility remains with those who do the choosing, as the admirable Plato somewhere says, so the Martyr is guiltless.¹¹⁵³

As for Isokasios, he became a professor after being a teacher (actually he lost the one <profession> before acquiring the other). And having fallen ill at some point in time in Aigai in Cilicia, and in his illness, he greatly desired rest, extended and deep; <and> he, therefore, took up lodging in the *naos* of the Martyr a little ways from the city, in the hope of obtaining it there the best of all. And so after finding great peace and after sleeping a little, he obtained healing along with the peacefulness, after having heard what things it was necessary to do from the Martyr and having done them. And he was

released from the sickness, although <the Martyr> first reproached him for his unbelief, she did not refuse him help. For thus the admirable Eudokios announced and related this to us, an illustrious and noble man who honours nothing more <highly> than the truth, who dwells in and is an adornment to this beautiful city of Tarsus.

Miracle 40

And Aretarchos, the sophist, here among us, of whom I cannot say whether he is quite incompetent or <just> unbelieving—for, in fact, both <characteristics> flourish and abound equally in him so that it is difficult to discern which of the two is the superior—nevertheless he appears a sophist. And he contracted an especially severe illness of the kidneys, so that as a result of his great pain he hoped many times for death, and even desired death because of the intensity of his pain, but nevertheless chanced upon help and healing from the Martyr, who told him the medicine that he needed and the most effective cure of the malady would be nothing other than the night oil of the light that always illuminates her precinct. After that fellow requested this very thing, and having anointed himself <with the oil> where the illness was consuming <him>, he did obtain healing but did not get rid of his impiety. For after speaking with great sagacity and deep intelligence and confessing that it was she who had provided the remedy, he attributed the grace of the healing to another: “For it is Sarpedon” he said, “who directed me to seek and receive <the remedy> from her.”

So then, cleverest and most intelligent of the sophists, you who exude Gorgias himself for us, would he, who sent you to another <healer> not have given <remedy> to

you if he had been able to but would he be sending his suppliant, his follower and—as you yourself would say—his initiate and devotee—to another, and this other an enemy?

And this constituted most of all the act of one admitting <his own> weakness, of one heralding the power of the Martyr, and of one demonstrating clearly to all that skill or power or wisdom—which in no way did he have <to begin with> had failed him—but the Virgin is the one who recently displayed her great power and who brings healing to all. But he was not so foolish, or even wise according to you, this most excellent <Sarpedon> that he was unable to obscure his ignorance, or powerlessness, or I would be very surprised. But because of you, oh noted and amazing rhetor, he is exposing this.

Only would that you and your soul might be healed by the Martyr, even if you attribute it to Sarpedon or to Apollo or to whichever of the *daemones* is dear to you. For the former <your physical healing> we will attribute to the power of the Martyr, and the latter <your spiritual healing> will count again <as proof> of your ignorance. For the latter is not significant to us, only the former would be.

Miracle 41

And so <you can see> then that the Martyr loves literature and rejoices in these literary eulogies. I will say something also about the things that happened to me, and for my benefit; since the Martyr herself prepared them for me, she knows that they happened and that I do not speak falsely. For it was during the annual festival of hers, and I, too, had prepared a little eulogy of a sort for the feast day, not to say anything of special note or something even worthy of her, but rather as one seeking to capture some of the

Martyr's good will, since she knows how to return very generous <recompense> even, also to those honouring her modestly.

But when one day remained until the delivery and presentation of the speech, some sort of infection afflicted my ear, both exceedingly grievous and painful to the extent that the whole ear was swollen, and fierce pains were shooting up from within, and violent throbbing also was attacking the base of my head, and for this reason a lot of buzzing within <the ear> was being created. As a result, I completely despaired of speaking, and had expectation of worse things to come. Already I began to be embarrassed somehow to speak something of praise to the crowd and, on the other hand, to forsake my turn at the moment set for the presentation <of my speech>.

All these things the Martyr prevented from happening. She appeared by night, and taking hold of my ear and giving it a good shake, she resolved the infection entirely into a bit of pus. After it had been rolled away from the windings and sacrosanct passageways—so to speak—I found myself on the *deikterion*, for thus the place is called on which speakers make their presentation, that is, the pulpit (*ambon*) or the speakers' rostrum (*akroaterion*); actually I was not yet one of those who speak in churches, and I said something or other and the Martyr extended her hand and grace to me in such a way that I even seemed to be somehow noteworthy, and had spoken reasonably well, and I carried away the greatest admiration for my words, for something that was not at all admirable. And when I was deemed worthy of the clerical council and the register of the preachers and priests, she was beside me much <of the time>, and appearing by night she would hold out in every case some book or a sheet of papyrus to me, that was and seemed

to me a sign of her complete approval. But if I was about to say something, and she was not seen doing this, her absence was conversely significant.

Miracle 42

This miracle as well ought to be remembered, though I recovered <the> memory of it with some difficulty. A certain Kalliste was a well-born and religious young woman who lived with her husband who was not very temperate but rather too easily aroused in regard to these vulgar pleasures and not at all satisfied by lawful intercourse but insatiably enjoying these <vulgar pleasures>. And so a certain one of the ladies of the stage, who, ruining herself also with the same man, mutilated the appearance of this Kalliste with deleterious drugs and disfigured her lovely face so that she no longer would be a source of pleasure to her husband and so that she herself would perform <Kalliste's> function and sleep with her illicit lover. Sad at this and separated from her husband (for the disfigurement of her appearance effectively moved Papias to hatred—for this was her husband's name), Kalliste fled for refuge to the Martyr, relating to her her own misfortune and the evil deed of the courtesan, and praying to procure some sort of a cure so that she might recover the comeliness of her appearance and the favour of her husband. The martyr listened to these prayers and was very much moved by the suffering—for, in fact the dear woman wept rivers of tears in addition to her words, and there is no accompaniment to prayer as excellent as copious weeping welling up from the very depths of the soul—and she revealed and prescribed the therapy at once. "Take," she said, "these soaps here, the ones sold in front of this *naos*, and after moistening them with wine, wash your face with this and immediately you will wash away the disfigurement."

Indeed, Kalliste did so straightway and straightway she delivered her own appearance from the disfigurement and her husband from the courtesan, a far worse disfigurement. Upon the application of the soaps, as they say, the deformity vanished and Kalliste was Kalliste again in appearance and pleasing to her husband.

Miracle 43

Neither let us forget another young woman, even though <she was> poor and undistinguished. This Bassiane at some point was estranged from her family, having taken a small portion of her personal gold pieces (these were little rings and small necklaces) and such as might belong to a working woman. She made her way to the *neos* and was residing there out of anger towards her family.

A certain virgin—one of those <there> at that time was living with her who took little account of the scrupulousness or piety befitting virgins. Finding Bassiane sleeping and absent, she filched the gold pieces for herself and left. The woman [Bassiane] arose and, finding she no longer had the same as she had shortly before, began to cry out and to complain to the Martyr, as if she <Thekla> had been trusted to guard these items, but had lost them or was denying them <to Bassiane>. Nevertheless, the Martyr, having compassion for Bassiane as well as hating the misconduct of the virgin, revealed her theft, chastising her severely, by revealing it to the victim and to all those at the *neos*, so that she, clearly exposed, returned the gold pieces to Bassiane, and thoroughly chastened, lived the rest of her life in such a way that her lapse was obscured and, moreover, the favour of the Martyr was regained.

Miracle 44

Well, then, the following story must also be told, so that we may relate something that recently happened as the last of the miracles—but it is not the Martyr’s last miracle, nor will there ever be a “last” one! For as long as there are people, <her> miracles too will be ever welling up, ever bubbling forth, ever abundant, ever healing, whatever the case. A certain woman of the very notable and well-born local family, Dosithea by name, ... but this is enough of those details!

For what purpose, even, does it serve to sprinkle drops of rain over the boundless sea? Even if I wished to tell more, I would not be able to find <more miracles>, I who indeed assembled even these with difficulty, running around hither and yon, gathering together these stories on every side, and compiling them together as if from some abyss of the distant past and forgetfulness, like traders who <gather> the well-known, precious gems.

However, there remain more than a few, and a great many more, and altogether even more than can be counted. Neither is it possible for me to become a winged or adamantine creature and to travel throughout the whole earth and sea to gather <the miracles> from each city, district, village, and household; nor is the compilation possible for me, nor is the composition attainable <for me>, nor is my life long enough to suffice for such an infinite multitude of miracles.

And so at this point, just as I said, I shall stop the narrative concerning these miracles so that I do not appear to pursue unprofitable and unattainable <goals>, but after adding this one <miracle> first, I shall welcome silence on these topics, because the Martyr publicly recognized many men as they lived to the pinnacle of excellence, and <as

well> she thoroughly trained many women who have adopted the same zeal. For instance, <take> right now the well-known Paul, who is both an Egyptian and is called “the Egyptian,” a man who in regard to his manner of life ranks with the mightiest and gigantic Elijah and John; and that Samos, who is “running <the race>” in company with the greatest of all, Elisha, and with the saints like him—for although Samos lived in this city <Seleucia>, he spent more time in the *neos* than did those who live at the *martyrion*, going up twice each day singing psalms; and there was no stopping <him> “neither fire, nor hail, nor snow, nor ice, nor the blast of the storm” as the God-inspired David somewhere says;¹¹⁵⁴ and <then to> Dexianos, “who although mortal used to drive immortal horses”—for involved in the midst of things and active in a more public life, he by no means differed from the excellence of those men, but ever absorbed in Christ <as he was> he practiced the same discipline as they—and then there are Karterios, John, <and> Phillip, more disciplined than yokefellows, each living in <his own> section of the same monastery, his life a shining example to one another comparable with those of old. Not even the much sought after episcopal throne distracted this John from his practice of strict devotion. And this is possible for all to see, for all those who see this man living still today according to the ancient standard of asceticism.

And of the women in turn there is again Marthana, Xenarchis, that Dionysias of ours, Sosanna, Theodoule, <and> all the others whom there is not time for me to name, unless perchance I myself were to desire like Hesiod also to write a catalogue of the most excellent women of our day.¹¹⁵⁵

The life, the character, and the conduct set by God, either of the men I listed or of the women, are <themselves> miracles of the Martyr and far superior to the miracles already cited.

For what could anyone say is better: concerning these people, on the one hand, than to be under the direction of such a leader and to be trained by her in asceticism; and concerning the Martyr, on the other hand, to take care of and to lead this group in comparison with which each individual female and male alike, the entire cosmos has no equal?

Miracle 45

Now it is not good to keep hidden from you one <miracle> that suddenly came to my mind. For that Xenarchis of ours has been joined in marriage with a husband, but she reached such a height of excellence and pleased the Virgin so much, though she was married, that the following is said to have happened concerning her. A certain one of the pious (whether of the men or of the women I cannot say), with a book in hand, gave it as a gift to her. This book was the Gospel. She received it with the greatest pleasure but smiling a little she is reported to have said, “The gift is god-inspired and admirable and incredibly great and like nothing else on the earth, but of what use will it be to me, who does not understand the first rudiments of letters and writing nor whence derive and go forth all the streams and channels of the words, unless perhaps even now the Teacher of my life...” And while saying these words she unbound the book and, opening it, bent her head as much as if to examine or even to kiss it. The moment she laid eyes on the writing, she began also to read so very quickly and so unhesitatingly that all those <women> with

her were astounded and quoted that word from the Gospel: “How does she know her letters without having learned them?” Quite clearly it was the Martyr who arranged this great miracle that day, having heard these <words> and having performed this <miracle>.

Miracle 46

Dionysia, they say, had begun to bid farewell to her husband, children, and home—to everything to put it simply—and for that very reason had retreated to the *neos*. And the Martyr had slept with her that entire night and <they say> held her in her arms. As a result, the bed-partner of Dionysia that night was amazed at the time. (This bed-partner was Sosanna who was still living at the time I was writing these words, surpassing all women in her way of life, and relating these events to me.) And raising herself many times in bed and leaning on her elbow, she observed the Martyr and was struck by awe and reflected on how there had been two in the beginning, but how now a third <person> was sleeping between them. But as she was <occupied> with such considerations, she saw her—for she was carefully keeping watch on her, whoever she was—floating up from between them but not standing up as would be normal for sleepers. And indeed she saw her slipping back again to her *thamos*, that place in which she is said to lie hidden as well.

Well then, after that night Dionysia was advanced to such a pinnacle of asceticism, that this dear woman became a marvel to the entire earth, as one who was practicing a way of life beyond a mere woman. And when she departed from the earth she did not go away <entirely>, having left for us her young daughter, Dionysia, who practiced the same way of life, thought the same thoughts, and walked in her footsteps,

but who had something even more extraordinary than her mother: her virginity pure and undefiled.

Epilogue

But as for me, O Virgin and Martyr of Christ and Apostle, the assignment you <gave> me with holy fear—inexpressibly great—I, nevertheless, accomplished, having confidence not in myself but in you who assigned me this holy work. For it was not within my small, insignificant power to dare to undertake <to record> your acts and miracles so very great, holy, and famous; the praise of which is more fitting to <be sung by> the angels, with whom even now you join singing the royal hymn. Hereafter, it would be up to you now also to perform this <miracle> along with the others: on the one hand, the reception of these small and insignificant <writings> offered to you from small and insignificant <beginnings> and, on the other hand, the presentation of them as great and wonderful. For it is not possible either for me, or for others who are wise and very eager to say something new, to proclaim anything at all worthy of you and your deeds. So now, pour forth and bestow your copious and abundant grace on these <writings>, that I ever may be regarded highly or become so through you and your grace. And having received them, repeat again those <favours> of yours towards me, I who have been delivered many times from illnesses and dangers and <plots of> ill will and the constant distress of trouble, the flood of which against me has become great, frequent, and severe, but which, by your will, did not overwhelm nor drown me, nor ever will overwhelm or drown me, as long as you in turn are willing and interceding for what is fair on my behalf and driving away all suffering at any rate; bring to an end also this grief now assailing

me. Oh Thrice-blessed One, make that dog, that ferocious swine, that base and perverse Porphyrios desist from his madness and fury against me! For even this man, you see, from base and nameless parents and from unsanctioned fornication, offspring of Famine and Poverty, this miserable era has made him seem to be somebody and to have power, this age that humbled everyone free and wellborn, but exalted every thief, runaway slave, and grave-robber.

With these things in mind, O Virgin, grant that we may be seen again in the holy rostrum (*anabathras*) of the holy *bema* of this church (*ecclesia*), preaching those things that are divinely ordained and many other topics which are customarily preached in churches (*ecclesiae*), and proclaiming you who are the loveliest first fruit of the church (*ecclesia*) after, of course, the apostles, or numbered even with those very apostles, and recovering again the traditions, the power-to-persuade those listening, the reverence, the advancement of the people, and the increase of faith and piety. For because of you, I felt confidence in my gift of teaching and my success, as you know, and because of you, applause and praise <are> mine and a certain [prestige] among orators both numerous and eminent. And now of these petitions I made now and for the sake of which I shall approach you each day and hour, may you never let a single one be in vain, unfulfilled, empty, and unfruitful for me. O Virgin and Martyr, you who have always cared about, do care about, and will care about my interests.

*The Virtuous Deeds of the Holy Apostle and Protomartyr Thekla
in the Myrtle Wood*¹⁵⁶

I have been so bold as to dispatch, <Your> Most Sacred Majesties, the true image of Thekla, the holy Apostle and beautiful Virgin, Protomartyr among women for your reverence, emboldened to face your authority by her who faced the fire in Iconium and the savage beasts and the fiercest bulls in Antioch, just as also her tradition testifies. It is fitting to relate those things we have learned from our ancestors lest it become a matter of doubt to the listeners, that this image is the true image of the holy apostle herself. For it is said, in order that I may speak concisely, that the blessed one herself, your Lordship<s>, after her deliverance, arrived in Seleucia, and, after the “games” meant to make martyrs, having been endorsed as an apostle by the holy Apostle Paul, her teacher and the teacher of the world, she found all people in Seleucia (the metropolis of the Isaurians) to be pagan and unbelievers in those times. And having hastened to teach the word of God, as someone committed to this city, well-born though she was, she hastened to live in solitary places. Wherefore she took up residence in the grotto in the Myrtle Wood where now there is a spring, but she would go forth on the Lord’s Day to collect plants and these she would eat for the whole week.

And it happened at that time that the priest of the pagans, the one who was in the Capitol which was in the city of the Seleucians, which is now the *Apostoleion*, from custom was exercising in the deserted place where the saint was wandering about and gathering the plants she used to eat. And having spotted her, the priest, being on

horseback, having goaded his horse, went close to her with mischievous intent, having thought her to be some young girl. And the holy Apostle Thekla having turned and having sent power forth from her, knocked him from his horse, and he was rendered speechless for three days and three nights, so that in great number the entire country of the region of the Isaurians gathered around him, dumbfounded by what had happened; for the priest was famous and eminent in those times. And when he recovered, he seized on the idea that she was to have been there from the gods and was angered at him and as a result he decided to commemorate the significant episode. And so he ordered a portrait artist to be fetched and said to him, "Go off and paint a small-faced maiden for me, who is eighteen years old give or take a little, whose beauty I cannot undertake to describe, wearing earrings and a necklace around her neck, as you can imagine," for thus the holy woman had been perceived by the lustful priest when she caused him to fall from his horse. And when the artist put his hand to painting the image guided by the power of her might, he painted a true image. After the image had been taken to him, upon seeing it, the lascivious priest recognized it was she; and having been empowered and having stood up, he embraced the image and agreed it was she. And he treasured this image in his own house, having come to believe in the message of the apostle. It was a painting passed on in succession by his descendants to the illustrious Achaïos, a learned sophist, a Christian man. And after his death the painting itself was seen when the blessed Achaïos himself was buried. For at that time he was a guardian of the *martyrion* of the holy Thekla, <and> having copied this portrait, he also personally gave it to those wanting it for a copy.

Since in turn the report concerning the holy apostle spread, she became known to many from that time on, with the result that the weak went up to her sanctuary and were

healed by her. And so, a child of one of the leading families of the city was troubled by an unclean spirit, becoming a paralytic. He was reared by a certain woman living in a farmhouse near the Myrtle Wood outside the city. And so when the woman saw that many healings at that time had been performed by the holy apostle, she carried up <to the sanctuary> the child troubled by the unclean spirit. And the saint received the child and took him in her arms.

After she had made the sign <of the cross> in Christ down to his limbs and had prayed for him, she gave the child—who was extremely pleased—back to the nurse in good health. And this nurse having received him, quickly carried him to his mother. And the child’s mother was astounded and, having gathered all her female relatives, rejoiced with them at the miracle, and led <them> off to her. And the holy One quickly expounded to them the Gospel of God, with which she had been entrusted by the apostle Paul.

And it happened that the father of the healed child was in Antioch when the holy Apostle Thekla was fighting the wild beasts. And his wife, having written <to him> in Antioch, quickly brought him <to Seleucia>. And having summoned to see <for himself> the holy, lovely Virgin, Protomartyr, and Apostle, he recognized <her> and asked her, “Are you not she who contended with wild beasts in Antioch?” And she said, “Yes.” And he replied, “And how did you escape savage beasts and those most fierce bulls to which you had been bound over and come here?” And the Apostle preached the Gospel of God to him as well. And having persuaded him to become a Christian, she wrote to the holy Apostle Peter in Antioch, and requested one of the priests from there—for there was a church there then, because in Antioch the word of our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God

and our God was first proclaimed, according to what has been written in the Acts of the holy apostles. Then the priest came from Antioch and baptized the child's father and his entire household with the blessing of the Holy Spirit. And after the father of the child that had been cured had donated part of his estate, the holy apostle together with the priest designed and founded the church; and from that time the church was called the Holy Peace, and the majority of the city was enlightened in Christ Jesus our Lord, the One enlightening our eyes for the understanding of Your triumphant power.

And after going up on the mountain called Kaleimeon or Rhodion, and finding a cave, she lived in it for many years. And some of the well-born women, having learned about the Virgin Thekla, withdrew to her and learned the teachings of God from her, and many of them renounced the world and lived with her. And then also a good report developed concerning her, and she effected healings. Before the people bringing the sick could open the door of the grotto, the diseases vanished. Those who were possessed, once they were near, were healed, <and> while the unclean spirits were fleeing from the afflicted, they cried out saying, "For what reason do you torture us before the appointed moment, O Virgin?" And to put it simply, there <was> no one who still had need of any doctor concerning any suffering or illness whatsoever. In fact, bringing the sick from other regions and countries, <people> brought them to her and they were healed straightway and returned to the homes healed, rejoicing, blessing and glorifying God. And so the doctors from the city of the Seleucians were undermined, by the loss of income, and because of jealousy [they] opposed the holy virgin and maidservant of God, and, a sense of helplessness gripped them—a devilish plan.

Well, there was a certain Proklianos, a leader of the city of the Seleucians, who had a wife named Androklea and a daughter named Theonilla. This daughter of his was born from her mother's womb with paralysis of her hands and feet; and so, although she was twenty-two years old, she was unable either to walk around by means of her feet or to lay hold of anything with her hands. Therefore, her parents were completely at a loss and kept saying, "To whom shall we leave our property?" For she was their only child. But Androklea, having learned that the Virgin Thekla performed many cures on the mountain, said to her husband, "My lord, I have an awesome thing to tell you, for I learned that the Virgin who lives on the mountain performs many healings. Come, let us also take our daughter there so that she, too, may be healed by her." But Proklianos said to her, "You know, my lady, that I am a leader of the city and I am afraid to go off <to her>, for I think she happens <to be one> of the Galileans, and if I go off to her, the city <will> learn and they <will> hand me over to fire; but rather seat her on a litter and two slaves will carry her; and—transport her by night!"

And thus his wife did: she transported her daughter and knocked at and opened the door in the grotto and asked, "Who is the Virgin Thekla?" And she said, "I am." And the woman took her daughter from the seat and cast her daughter and herself at her feet and cried out saying, "As you have been merciful to many others, so also have mercy on this girl." And <Thekla> asked them if they had the holy baptism, and they answered saying, "We happen to be pagan." And the holy virgin said to them, "I am not the healer but rather God <is>, the one who lives in the heights and watches over the humble. And so if you wish your daughter to be healed, receive the seal in Christ, and if she does not come away from the washing of immortality walking and grasping with her hands, may I

be bound to burn a second time!” And the girl’s mother, gripped by desire on the one hand, and by fear on the other, permitted her daughter to receive the seal in Christ, and prostrating themselves before the saint, they said, “If we are worthy, let the will of the Lord be done.” And once they had renounced the devil and submitted to our Lord Jesus Christ, she instructed them, having taught them the good news of God, and having anointed them with the oil of gladness, she baptized them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And Theonilla departed from the baptism both walking with her feet and holding things with her hands and no longer did she need the litter but rather she went away to her house walking on foot. And the people of the city on learning <this> cried out saying, “Great is the God of the Christians who performs great miracles.”

And so the doctors of the city of the Seleucians having learned too of this as has been said before still opposed the Virgin Thekla, the handmaid of the Lord, out of envy. And one day they held a meeting and they agreed, “She happens to be a priestess of Artemis, and <Artemis> listens to her since she is a virgin, and if she asks something from <Artemis> she gives it to her. And so, come! let us find <some> licentious men, get them drunk, pay them a fair price, and give them another instruction too—to go off and to defile <the Maiden>. Then Artemis <will> listen to her no longer.”

And so they did this: and the men sent by the doctors, going off into the grotto, knocked on the door of the grotto. And the holy virgin Thekla opened the door trusting courage in God, for she knew in advance the treachery, and she said to them, “What do you wish, <my> children?” And they said to her, “Who is Thekla?” And she said, “I am, and what do you want?” And they said, “We lust after you.” She said, “With me being an

old woman?" But they said, "We cannot fail to do what we want." And the holy Virgin said to the, "Wait, <my> children, and you will see the mercy of God." And as she was being overpowered by them, she looked up to heaven and she said, "O God, you who are formidable and immortal, who rescued me from the fire, who did not hand me over to Thamyris, who did not hand me over to Alexander, who rescued me from wild beasts, who everywhere worked on my behalf and exalted your maidservant, free me from these lawless ones and do not make me an example for women in my old age but rather keep my virginity undefiled." And immediately a voice came from heaven saying, "Thekla, my true maidservant, do not fear, for I am with you; look up to where the rock has opened before you, for there shall be an eternal home for you and there I will visit you." Having turned she saw the rock opened with a great aperture and she did what had been told to her and having fled she quickly entered the rock, and immediately she was enclosed and not even a join could be seen. But they laid hold of her clothing, and a part of her veil remained outside for the faith of those who see it. And thus Thekla from Iconium, the Virgin, Protomartyr and Apostle of God, died.

She was, then, eighteen years old when she heard the teaching of Paul, and after her journeying and her ascetic life she lived for seventy-two years more, and at ninety years she died, to the glory of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit forever and ever world without end. Amen.

Notes to Chapter 14

- ¹¹¹⁸ Dagron, G., ed. 1978. *Vie et Miracles de Sainte Thècle: Texte grec, traduction, et commentaire*. Subsidia Hagiographica 62. Brussels.
- ¹¹¹⁹ López-Salvá (1972-3), 239-42, provides a brief summary of Ps.-Basil's stylistic elements.
- ¹¹²⁰ Høgel (2002), 138-9.
- ¹¹²¹ In general, in the *L&M*, Pseudo-Basil uses the terms *δαίμων/δαίμονες* (rendered in this translation as *daemon/daemones*) in the sense of evil spiritual beings. Their activity is contrasted with that of the saints. He also uses it in reference to Sarpedon and Athena. As I noted at the beginning of this work, I have left *daemon* untranslated throughout the dissertation and my English translation of the *Miracles*.
- ¹¹²² Loxias was a cult name for Apollo.
- ¹¹²³ Herod. 1.55-59. Please note that, although I have independently found and/or confirmed many of the Classical references noted in the translation, the vast majority were noted in Dagron (1978), 157. I have also notes these within the individual miracles in my translation.
- ¹¹²⁴ See Dagron (1978), 291, n. 2 suggests that this is either a hendiadys "books of history" or as an opposition between oral and written sources. Elizabeth Bongie suggests it could also refer to histories (e.g. non-fiction such as Herodotus) and literature (e.g. Homer).
- ¹¹²⁵ For a discussion on the myth, see Dagron (1978), 84 n. 4.
- ¹¹²⁶ Hom. *Il.* 5.
- ¹¹²⁷ Hom. *Il.* 12.73.
- ¹¹²⁸ I have translated *ἐν ἀφεδρωῶνι καθεζομένων* here as "sitting in the privy."
- ¹¹²⁹ Perhaps *τὰ σεμνά*, line 5, refer to relics.
- ¹¹³⁰ *Ψήφος*, line 6, refers to a small round pebble or precious gem. I have rendered it as *tesserae*.
- ¹¹³¹ Hom. *Il.* 4.139 and 11.388.
- ¹¹³² Hom. *Od.* 8.492-95.
- ¹¹³³ The Maeotis Lake in Scythian territory that connects to the Black Sea. Herodotus (87) calls the lake the "Mother of the Pontus." See Herod. 99f, 113f, 119-125.
- ¹¹³⁴ I have rendered *τῶν ἀσκληπιαδῶν* as "physicians."
- ¹¹³⁵ Hom. *Il.* 2.71.
- ¹¹³⁶ Anthrax = "coal."
- ¹¹³⁷ Eur. *Or.* v. 14.
- ¹¹³⁸ Dagron (1978), 325, n. 4, states that the *style* of this passage is Homeric and that the adjective *enualios* is employed in Hom. *Il.* 17.211.
- ¹¹³⁹ Hysistios' wife's prayers are compared to those of the biblical Hannah (1 Sam. 1). In Dagron's Greek text and in his Greek index (1978), 326 and 424, respectively, she is listed as Ἄννα; however, Dagron, p. 327, n. 4 and also p. 156, recognizes the woman as the OT figure of 1 Sam. 1. Johnson (2006), 158, n. 60, renders this identification with the Old Testament Hannah correctly while Dagron reads "Anna" of the New Testament. The context of the miracle renders this connection impossible. It is definitely not Anna but Hannah to which the author is referring when he comments on the Jewish custom of having children. Anna, on the other hand, was widowed at a young age and lived celibately in the temple the rest of her life devoting herself to a life of prayer (Luke 2:26). "Hannah" with a rough breathing mark is clearly required. For more on the identification of Hannah, see Chapter 11: "Explicit Biblical References," the section above on "Theme of Triumph", and Appendix B on Jews in the *Miracles*.
- ¹¹⁴⁰ For more on Ps.-Basil's characterization of the Jews, see the Appendix B on Jews in the *Miracles*.

¹¹⁴¹ Hom. *Il.* 1.350-351.

¹¹⁴² For more on this, see Appendix C on Mosaics.

¹¹⁴³ Dagron (1978), 341, n. 1, explains that the Ketis is the upper Calycadnus region, home to the Isaurians. For further discussion see Ramsay ([1890] 1962), 366-7.

¹¹⁴⁴ For more on the name “Eurybatos” which means “wide-stepping” or “spacious”, see Dagron (1978), 347 n. 2, who cites *RE* 6. col. 1319.2 (Hoefler). The name came to stand for a proverbial cheat.

¹¹⁴⁵ *Νυμφευτήριον* suggests a “nuptial chamber.”

¹¹⁴⁶ Hom. *Il.* 5.720 and 8.382.

¹¹⁴⁷ Hom. *Il.* 15. 273 and 619.

¹¹⁴⁸ The reference to Laestrygonia is a literary flourish by Ps.-Basil in which he likens the bandits to the legendary Laestrygonians, the cannibalistic giants of Hom. *Od.* 10.80. See Dagron (1978), 121-2 and n. 1. Also, see above, notes 461, 633, and 644.

¹¹⁴⁹ Kapaneus was one of the seven Argive chieftans who attacked Thebes (Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes*). He is notable for his defiance of the gods for which Zeus struck him dead with a thunderbolt.

¹¹⁵⁰ See *LSJ* sv *λεία*. which cites *Μυσῶν λεία* as proverbial for “anything that may be plundered with impunity.” See Strattis, *Comicus* 35; Arist. *Rh.* 137.2b.33.

¹¹⁵¹ *Il.* 10.496.

¹¹⁵² Hom. *Il.* 1.365.

¹¹⁵³ Plato, *Rep.* 10.616e.

¹¹⁵⁴ Ps.-Basil’s direct biblical reference is accompanied by a casual citation of the passage: “as the God-inspired David somewhere says.” Such citations of scripture are found in the Bible itself: in Acts 13:35, “So it is stated elsewhere” and proceeds to quote Ps. 16:10, and Heb. 5:6, “And he says in another place” which is followed by lines from Ps. 110.4. See above, Chapter 10 (on “Direct Biblical Quotations”) for more on this topic.

¹¹⁵⁵ See Dagron’s comment (1978), 407, n. 8 on Ps.-Basil’s comment that had he desired to and if he had the time to he could also, like Hesiod, have written “a catalogue of the most excellent women of [his] day.” In this, Ps.-Basil is referring to a lost work of Hesiod entitled *Μεγάλαι Ἴσσαι (Γυναικῶν Κἀταλογος)*. Dagron refers the reader to *RE* 8.1 col. 1201-40 (Rzach).

¹¹⁵⁶ My translation of the *Myrtle Wood* is based on Dagron’s edition (1978), Appendix, 216-21.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation examines the tradition of Thekla as revealed by the textual tradition primarily in the light of a careful reading of the *Miracles of Thekla* in their entirety based on a first translation into English which I have prepared and provide herein. This study also addresses Thekla's significance to her devotees in the Eastern frontier region of the Roman Empire, as well as the scope and impact of her influence across time and space as attested in the historical record. Both Thekla and the *Miracles* are unique and stand at the beginning of their respective traditions: Thekla as first among extra-biblical Christian women of faith; and the text as an early form of the miracle collection of a sainted thaumaturge. From this study, several conclusions may be reached in regard to both.

Let us begin with the *Miracles*. The forty-six-miracle corpus, along with its companion piece the *Life of Thekla* (essentially an amplification of the *Acts of Thekla*), was written by an anonymous author, Ps.-Basil, a resident of Seleucia, over a period of as many as forty years, approximately 430 to 470, and may be regarded as the author's life work. The text met with several redactions that roughly correspond to the tenures of four Seleucian bishops. The account stops short of the imperial benefactions by Emperor Zeno, who himself was an Isaurian by birth, to Thekla's *temenos* in 476. Had Ps.-Basil still been writing, he most surely would have included Zeno's patronage in his account.

The *Miracles* were written for the express purpose of eliciting awe for Thekla in an attempt to promote her cult and, secondarily, to advance Ps.-Basil's position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Seleucia. Ps.-Basil's self-presentation as Thekla's "official"

biographer and special recipient of her grace was calculated to secure his reinstatement and promotion in the priestly *cursus honorum*. As I have shown, the author's characterization in scholarship as narcissistic and self-promoting, however, may be inappropriate. If one moves beyond Ps.-Basil's expressed hope for reinstatement and advancement (that may or may not have been correctly interpreted in the scholarship), another picture emerges. It can be argued from internal evidence in the text that Ps.-Basil had a genuine concern for the welfare of others.

The text resists tidy categorization in regard to genre. It may be situated in an overarching genre of hagiography but also exhibits elements of paradoxography in its paratactic structure and repeated reference to *thauma*. As we have seen, the text is poised at the end of the Classical paradoxographical tradition and near the beginning of the Christian hagiographical tradition before its crystallization into predictable forms. I suggest that Ps.-Basil purposely blended the two to appeal to his mixed audience.

This also explains the presence of both Biblical references and classical quotations in the text. The classical quotations and allusions have been previously noted in other studies. By establishing criteria for categorizing biblical references, this study demonstrates that biblical reference, both direct and indirect, counter to general opinion, figures significantly in the text. Based upon these criteria, some previously suggested parallels have been rejected but a great number have been added. By means of comprehensive textual analysis, I have also established that Jesus Christ, who has been regarded as largely absent from the text, is centered at its very core and characterized specifically as "King." It is by His "One Hand, Intent, and Power"¹⁵⁷ that the miracles are effected through the agency of his handmaid Thekla.

There has been long-standing discussion in regard to the author's organizing principle in the *Miracles*. Building upon studies of others, I have provided a detailed structural analysis of the text identifying different registers that the author employed, including emotive in regard to wonder, social, geographic, and thematic. Though the registers at times interlace and even supplant one another, this study identifies a definite organizing principle at work in the text, one that confirms Dagron's observation that although the ordering appears haphazard there exists more design than may at first be apparent.¹¹⁵⁸

I also examined the nature of Thekla's miracles and the language of wonder contained in the text. My findings buttress the position of other scholars who argue against the primacy of healing in the *Miracles* and against Thekla's exclusive characterization as healer. Her thaumaturgical activity extended well beyond healing.

The healing miracles, while recorded primarily to evoke awe for the wonderworking activity of Thekla, provide valuable information in regard to faith healing and incubation and their interplay with other branches of ancient medicine. The text presents individuals who are actively engaged in the pursuit of health and advancing quality of life either for themselves or for others. In many cases, having exhausted traditional medical options, they turned to Thekla for help. This study catalogued the various illnesses that are represented in the text, noted the difference in types of illness with those recorded in other periods in other miracles collections, compared the practice of Christian incubation with its pagan counterpart, and examined the language of healing employed by Ps.-Basil. Additionally, this study incorporated Spanish scholarship on

incubation in Late Antique miracle collections because the practice persists to this day in Spain.

Within the miracle corpus, I noted an overarching theme of collective Christian celebration. In the *Miracles*, celebration reaches its zenith with the description of Thekla's annual *panegyreis*, at Dalisandos and at Hagia Thekla, the various elements of which I examined. By means of an independent Byzantine primary source I have been able to confirm the date of the festival as September 24. I also discussed the place of *panegyris* in Late Antique/Early Byzantine culture and, in particular, the analogy drawn by the Church Fathers between *panegyris* and life itself. Related to the theme of *panegyris* is the notion of competitive excellence, the language of which Christianity conscripted to describe and encourage the pursuit of spirituality.

In light of Epiphanius' claim that heretical movements, in particular the Encratites and *apotactites*, were active in Asia Minor, and in an effort to explain Ps.-Basil's excommunication, suggesting that it was due to latent heretical sympathies, scholars have raised the question as to the type of Christianity practiced at Hagia Thekla. I provided an overview of those movements and examined the text for evidence for their presence at Hagia Thekla. There is no indication of Encratites at the community and while Egeria noted the presence of *apotactites* upon her visit there, the term is not used in the *Miracles*. One woman who took up residence within the community is described by Ps.-Basil as having begun to *ἀποτάττεσθαι*, to renounce the things of the world. There is no evidence of heresy in the *Miracles* and the doctrinal creeds dotted throughout the text represent a faith fully orthodox.

Let us now turn from the text itself to review the findings in regard to the person of Thekla and her significance. In the *Miracles*, Thekla is primarily characterized as a militant saint, as a fiery, dynamic individual, and an ardent avenger of injustice. She does not act particularly saintly. Her behaviour, however, is reflective of the collective characterization of the people of the region and makes her particularly suited, unlike Paul, to missionary activity there.

Thekla is often referred to as thrice-blessed and three epithets are frequently applied to Thekla in the textual tradition: Apostle, Martyr, and Virgin. These terms correspond to various stages in the development of the early Church: the Apostolic Age, the period of the Martyrs, and the ascetic movement with its emphasis on virginity. Thekla, who is thought to have lived from A.D. 30 to 120, herself lived during those times. My survey of the occurrence and context of those terms in the *Life*, the *Miracles*, and the *Myrtle Wood* shows that, in order of frequency, Thekla most frequently is represented in her aspect as Martyr which bespeaks her thaumaturgical activity; as Apostle, with reference to her authority and divine assignment; and Virgin, as to her manner of life and intercessory work. To further contextualize Thekla, the survey could be extended in the future to the rest of the textual tradition in a comparative study.

Another description of Thekla contained in the *Miracles* but previously not noted, is that of choral leader of her devotees, who themselves are collectively described by Ps.-Basil as a choral ensemble extraordinaire unlike any the world has ever seen. In the *Symposium*, Methodius also presents Thekla as the leader of a chorus of virgins and characterizes Christ, the Archvirgin, as *Choragos* of their virginal chorus. The phrase “chorus of virgins” appears frequently in Christian texts of Late Antiquity and is typically

interpreted in a metaphorical sense. Our study traces the development of the phrase and its significance in Christian tradition. Noting that it functions both metaphorically and in a literal sense in Christian texts, I advance the suggestion that dance may well have been a persistent cultic practice as well as a liturgical adornment in the churches of Cappadocia and Rough Cilicia.

Thekla as choral leader under the direction of Christ, the *Choragos*, is a powerful metaphor. Thekla was a dynamic individual who, recognizing her own weakness, sought strength in the Lord. Thekla serves as a model of empowerment specifically for those throughout history who, like herself, have chosen to live in total reliance upon God. This paradigm, however, renders Thekla an ill-suited champion for feminists, many of whom seek to replace God with the goddess in themselves. A careful examination of the textual evidence in the *Ath*, Methodius' *Symposium*, the *Myrtle Wood*, and the *Life & Miracles* does not support the long-standing characterization of Thekla as a proto-feminist. Such an idea is disconnected from fact and does not maintain the integrity of the texts or of the Christian tradition in regard to Thekla.

Thekla's influence is attested by the iconographic and onomastic record, by the scope of her cult, by the Ethiopic, Syriac, and Coptic textual traditions, and in early Byzantine liturgy all of which this study notes. The phenomenon that perhaps most testifies to the enduring impact of the story of Thekla is her many namesakes including Thekla, the ninth-century Byzantine composer/nun, the "sweet echo" as she was known, who wrote a hymn for St. Thekla. Thekla's memory is echoed, preserved, and perpetuated by her namesakes.

These attestations to the story of Thekla do not, however, address the question of her historicity. Regardless of her historicity, the story of Thekla has captured and fired the imagination of the Church almost from its inception. As I have already noted, many scholars acknowledge a historic core or nucleus in the Thekla story, in particular, that part attached to her martyrial trials.

In addressing Thekla's historicity, I have employed a methodology set forth by Ps.-Basil himself in the *Miracles*, that of using people, places, and names as investigative tools and in way of verification. By synthesizing hypotheses from early scholarship on Thekla with later epigraphic, onomastic, and numismatic evidence, this study definitively identified Queen Tryphaena of the *ATH* and the *Life* as the historical Queen Antonia Tryphaena. Having established that connection, I proceeded with a careful investigation of the ancestral holdings and kingdoms associated with her dynastic family and demonstrated that Seleucia and neighboring areas were under her family's control at the time that Thekla took up residence there. I argue that Thekla chose Seleucia, in large part, because of these connections. This connection has not previously been made but provides a historically valid explanation for Thekla's choices and actions thereby further anchoring her story in time and place.

Following late-nineteenth-/early-twentieth-century scholarship, I noted many details that would require firsthand knowledge of the events contained in the Antiochene portion of Thekla's story, and compared them with the historical record which helped to situate, as Ramsay had already suggested, the beginning of the story in the reign of Claudius, who was a relative of Queen Tryphaena. The accuracy of the details do suggest an eye-witness report. I cautiously advance the hypothesis that the Antiochene portion of

the story, the nucleus regarded as historical by many scholars, rather than being a product of “oral tradition circulated by celibate story-telling women in rebellion to their husbands” was instead written or perhaps commissioned by Queen Antonia Tryphaena herself. That story was later united with the Iconian portion in the *ATH* which itself underwent a series of redactions.

In the examination of the Christian notion of divine assignment I noted that it contains a specificity in regard to region. The implication in the *Life* is that Thekla’s *chōra* consisting of Seleucia and surrounding area was divinely assigned in the same way as were those of the Apostles. To determine the outlines of Thekla’s *chōra*, I identified the cities cited in the *Miracles* and found that her *chōra* was contiguous to that of St. Paul’s but distinct from it. Thekla’s *chōra* was comprised of many Isaurian cities, some belonging to Antiochus IV and some to Polemo II, the free city of Seleucia, the priest-kingdom of Olba administered by Polemo II, and her sacred precinct two miles south of Seleucia. Thekla’s *chōra* may be described as sacred Rough Cilicia. I compiled and have included a map showing the general area of her *chōra* true to the divisions of that area during the time of Claudius when Thekla took up residence there. A few short years later, boundaries and emperors had changed, Queen Tryphaena was no longer a close relative of the reigning emperor, and the area was no longer part of their family’s holdings. Only during the reign of Claudius, the period which is represented on the map, do all the details supplied in the *ATH* (and the *Life*) support one another. This further argues for the veracity of the account.

Finally, in Appendices A and C, I sought to correlate my excavation of the text with the archaeological record. A detailed semantic analysis of the building terms and a

thorough examination of Ps.-Basil's descriptions of the *temenos* might prove helpful in future archeological surveys of Hagia Thekla and further surveys might shed light onto the exact meanings of the words although, according to Dr. Hellenkemper, archaeological survey thus far does not further elucidate the terms.

The *Miracles* contain much that can be used in way of supporting or supplemental information to more in-depth studies. It does not provide, as might be hoped or expected, detailed information on the Isaurians, women's roles, or ascetic practice.

Thekla's assignment was specific to cities rather than to the countryside. There are more references to Jews (addressed in Appendix B) than one might expect but the archaeological record attests to a Jewish population at Seleucia. At the same time, the polis-centricity of the *Miracles* denies the reader a detailed look at the Isaurian people who (apart from the peace-hostage Bassiane) are characterized, as in other Late Antique texts, as bandits, thieves and robbers. The *Miracles* do have a good deal to say about brigandage, theft, and fraud.

The *Miracles* paint with broad strokes the picture of an active, itinerant, bustling society, a society on the move with ferries, mules, horses, and ships going to and fro. While the reader is rarely invited into a person's home and then but for a moment, he is treated to walks in the woods, to gardens, picnics, and bird sanctuaries. The *Miracles* may well prove useful in the study of Late Antique/Early Byzantine landscape and garden culture.

In much the same way that Egeria's *Itinerarium* describes the worship of the early Church, the *Miracles* open a window onto Christian festivals and celebrations. As

someone has previously mentioned, it was to the East, particularly Anatolia and Isauria, that festivals belonged. Mitchell writes that the shrine of St. Thekla

offered a powerful fusion of the traditions of monastic asceticism and of the popular religious festival which generated a tremendous appeal to the inhabitants of the early Byzantine world.¹¹⁵⁹

In the *Miracles* the emphasis is not upon quiet, reflective, cloistered Christians engaged in the pursuit of spirituality but rather on a collective community of believers engaged in celebration, often outdoors.

The *Miracles* are an expression of a joyous and vibrant Christianity, a Christianity “freshly and stridently victorious over paganism.”¹¹⁶⁰ In this study, I briefly touched upon parallels that have been drawn in scholarship between Thekla and mythological characters and classical divinities. This study of the *Miracles* indicates that Ps.-Basil does not present Thekla as their successor but rather as their supplanter, and superior to them.

The Christianity of the *Miracles* does not exclude the unbeliever nor does it gloss over the faults and failings of Christians. It is a text that recognizes the weakness of the human condition but does not stand in judgement. The author does not adopt a patronizing or moralizing tone although people often do meet with the consequences of their actions at the hand of Thekla. Through Christ’s redemptive and transformative power and by the agency of Thekla, the *Miracles* extend the hope of the reversal (ῥοπή) of circumstances and even of character.

It is my hope that this study and the accompanying translation of the *Miracles* will prove to be a helpful touch point for scholars in various fields. It has been my desire to contextualize Thekla in a way that is true to her tradition, maintains the integrity of the

texts, and is consonant with the historical, archaeological, onomastic, numismatic, epigraphic, and iconographic record. To my mind, this approach provides a more meaningful Thekla than any construct possibly could. Despite the many redactions of the texts, through all the layers of appropriation and scholarly constructs, a certain irrepressibility of Thekla still shines.

I close with M. S. Reinach's observation that:

...cette légende de Thékla, si belle par endroits et si touchante, d'où se dégage la personnalité d'une vierge robuste, d'une Amazone chrétienne, qu'on n'oublie pas après avoir appris à la connaître.¹¹⁶¹

Notes to the Conclusion

¹¹⁵⁷ *Mir.* 6.14-15.

¹¹⁵⁸ Dagron (1978), 30.

¹¹⁵⁹ Mitchell (1993), vol. 2, 117.

¹¹⁶⁰ Vyronis (1981), 200.

¹¹⁶¹ Reinach (1910), 122.

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APPENDIX A:
EXCAVATING THE TEXT:
THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE SITE

Before the earliest excavations of Hagia Thekla (hereafter HT) in the early twentieth century, the site had long fallen to ruin. Today little remains of that once-thriving site of international pilgrimage; little that would suggest the imperial benefactions by the Emperor Zeno and the *μέγιστον τέμενον* that he built there;¹¹⁶² almost nothing that hints of the extensive bird *paradeisos*, the gardens and myrtle wood, or the healing baths that visitors to HT enjoyed during the fourth and fifth centuries. These things are known primarily from the ancient texts especially from the *Miracles*.¹¹⁶³ According to Dr. Hellenkemper, HT by the seventh century had started to decline and by the thirteenth or fourteenth had fallen into disuse.

Discussion of the site has been published by Herzfeld and Guyer (1930) who did the initial field work and the only excavations of the site to date in 1907; Forsyth (1957); Kramer (1963); Gough (1972); Feld (1963); Wilkinson (1973); Hild, Hellenkemper, and Hellenkemper-Salies (1984); Hellenkemper (1986); Hild and Hellenkemper (1986-90); and Hill (1990), who, in part, built upon the work by Hild and Hellenkemper. Dagron (1978) attempted to correlate the material evidence with the textual evidence of the *Miracles*. While Hill acknowledges Dagron's contribution he suggests that Dagron might have given more consideration to the conclusions of Herzfeld and Guyer.¹¹⁶⁴ A useful and brief summary of previous studies is provided by Cooper (1995).¹¹⁶⁵ As I have not had the

opportunity to visit HT, I am greatly indebted to Dr. Hellenkemper who graciously provided from his own surveys much of the information included below. His latest visit to what he terms “his beloved Hagia Thekla” was in approximately 2002. Any inaccuracy is mine alone.

Dr. Hellenkemper describes HT, which covered over thirty hectares, as equal to a city and larger than many early Byzantine cities in southern Anatolia. Indeed, in the *Life*, Ps.-Basil also conceptualizes it as a city:

At any rate, you never could find her *ναὸν* and city (*πόλιν*) without townfolk or foreigners—for, in fact,¹¹⁶⁶ thereafter it was transformed in appearance, use, and beauty into a ‘city’.

Although not officially a city, HT for all intents and purposes was a city. A holy walled city with churches, monasteries, and hospices. A pilgrimage city with unusually large cisterns to provide for the thousands of visitors that flocked there to attend the *panegyris* of Thekla each September.

The HT, covering approximately 30 hectares is situated approximately two kilometres southwest of Seleucia (present-day Silifke) on a hill that once included a myrtle wood. The fourth-century pilgrim Egeria in her travel journal describes the approach to the site:

Et quoniam inde ad sanctam Teclam, qui locus est ultra civitatem in colle sed plano habebat de civitate forsitan mille quingentos passus...¹¹⁶⁷

Ps.-Basil refers to the highway that connected Seleucia to HT in *Mir.* 25 when he writes about those who were coming to partake of the healing bath:

[A]nd it became a most effective cure at one and the same time for the entire city, with the result that the highway

(λεωφόρον) over there was not sufficient for those going up in lamentation and tears, or for those coming back down with happiness and praises. They ascended with their eyes shut at the time, but descended with their eyes wide open.¹¹⁶⁸

He refers to the road again when explaining that a thief had hidden an object that he had stolen from Thekla in a tree, “on the portion of the road leading up from the city to her” (ἐν τινι μέρει τῆς ἐπ’ αὐτήν ἐκ τοῦ ἄστεος ἀναγούσης ὁδοῦ).¹¹⁶⁹

Dr. Hellenkemper refers to this as “the pilgrims’ road”, and describes it as a direct, ancient highway from Seleucia that begins as a serpentine trace but becomes an impressive ravine in the soft limestone rock that at last opens upon a panoramic view of HT.¹¹⁷⁰ He notes the easy access from all four directions and identifies two main highways leading to HT: one from the north, just described, and the second, the ancient coastal road coming from the south from Holmoi/Tasucu, the harbor to Cyprus.

That there were many avenues of access to HT is confirmed by Ps.-Basil:

And so, it was <possible> to see every path (ἀτραπὸν) and every thoroughfare (λεωφόρον) from the lowest to the highest places, facing in this direction and leading hither teeming with horses, mules, cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys and even dogs and pigs being driven towards this one place...¹¹⁷¹

Arriving by boat at Holmoi, visitors followed the famous coastal highway that led to Seleucia. Presumably a road branched from the highway and led to HT from the highway. When describing the approach of visitors to HT from other directions, Ps.-Basil generally writes that an individual went up to or arrived at the *neos* but in the two accounts in which visitors arrive by sea and, therefore, make their approach from the south, he indicates that they took the road to the *martyrion*. From the north, one is said to

go up to the *neos*; from the south, one arrives at the *martyrion*. This distinction suggests that these are not overarching terms for HT but, rather, individual structures at the complex.

The site, which covers approximately thirty hectares, included a collection of churches, cloisters,¹¹⁷² and cisterns. Today there are remains of at least three churches (Dr. Hellenkemper noted one more round church than Herzfeld, to the west of the North Church) and ten “imposing” cisterns, a bath house, and stone graves (that perhaps predate the foundation of HT).

According to Thekla’s cult legend based on the *Miracles*, Hill argues that there were two “spots of great significance” at HT: 1) the subterranean cave in which Thekla lived which subsequently became the Cave Church and 2) the point from which she descended into the ground, later marked by the altar of her *martyrion*, which was part of an above ground basilica of “substantial” size. Hill suggests that these spots were in close proximity and he identifies the basilica as the fourth-century one that Herzfeld and Guyer discovered.¹¹⁷³

Thekla’s unhewn limestone cave was the sacred center of her precinct.¹¹⁷⁴ It has Roman Doric columns, according to Dr. Hellenkemper, which may witness to its prior use as a pagan sanctuary (the columns, of course, may instead have been transported to the cave for reuse). Sometime in the fourth century the cave was incorporated into the subterranean basilica known as the Cave Church which measured approximately twelve by eighteen meters.¹¹⁷⁵ This may have been the *martyrion* that Egeria described.¹¹⁷⁶ The Cave Church either was built in conjunction with the fourth-century Basilica Church that was built above ground or preceded it and was subsequently reconfigured to adjoin it,

serving as its crypt.¹¹⁷⁷ Hill notes loose gold glass *tesserae* discovered among the rubble of the Cave Church. Here my survey of the text and others' survey of the site meet, for in *Mir.* 10 the words of an inscription on the church wall are said to be made of fine gold *tesserae* (*ψηφίδος λεπτής και χρυσής*).¹¹⁷⁸

The Basilica Church even today presents a commanding presence and is considered to be the largest of Cilician basilicas measuring eighty-one meters by forty-three meters at its latest expansion. It was built in part over the Cave Church and may have been constructed, as Hill suggests, as early as the fourth century and then undergone subsequent renovation and expansion in the late fifth perhaps due to benefactions of Emperor Zeno. Though adjoined, access to the *martyrion* was separate from the basilica. A fragment of the Basilica's apse still stands, a mute witness to its lost splendour.¹¹⁷⁹

The Basilica Church seems to have been constructed (or undergone its final expansion) at much the same time as another church at HT situated approximately one hundred sixty meters to the north of it. Although this structure, known as the Cupola Church, according to Dr. Hellenkemper, does not have a cupola but rather a four-sided wooden roof. The church, measuring seventy-eight by 35 meters, though smaller than the basilica, was more "ambitious architecturally"¹¹⁸⁰ and more lavishly decorated. Surveys have identified Proconnesian marble and mosaics, opus sectile floors, and capitals and brackets in the narthex, nave, and nucleus elaborately decorated with figures of birds. Hill is of the opinion that the bird *paradeisos* described in *Mir.* 24 may have provided inspiration for the carvings.¹¹⁸¹ It features a sigma courtyard, an architectural element common to imperial palaces which perhaps speaks to Zeno's patronage, but according to Dr. Hellenkemper is not on the same scale. Guyer thought the Cupola Church to be

Zeno's benefaction to HT, while Hill thinks it unnecessary to limit Zeno's contribution to just one structure.¹¹⁸²

A bath house with a "circular chamber flanked by eight alternating circular and rectangular niches" is situated to the west of the Cupola Church and shares the same masonry.¹¹⁸³ Dr. Hellenkemper states that the bath house is relatively small compared to other buildings on the site and suggests that there may have been more buildings with bath facilities. The many extant cisterns lay west of the bath house. An aqueduct situated in the foothills to the west provided the water for HT. Only the pillars of the aqueduct bridge remain and are dated by Hild and Hellenkemper to the fourth century.¹¹⁸⁴ Such large-scale provision for water attests to a significant number of people at the site. Hild and Hellenkemper also note simple and unadorned graves that predate the pilgrimage site.

The North Church is the first that a visitor would come upon approaching HT from Seleucia and measures approximately sixty by thirty meters but has not been excavated.¹¹⁸⁵ Herzfeld and Guyer noted another smaller church northwest of the Cupola Church but the remains are no longer extant.

The *Miracles* provide scattered bits of information about the site. As we noted in the chapter on topography, Ps.-Basil is generally concerned with orientation and topographic detail, however, in regard to the site itself, apart from two instances, he gives little detail. *Μαρτύριον, τέμενος, βήμα, θάλαμος, νᾱός*, and *νεός* are among the terms he employs. That few building or architectural terms occur in the text poses a challenge in correlating the text with the site (compounded by the fact that the site has fallen into such ruin), nevertheless, we shall mention a few things below that can be learned about

the site from the *Life and Miracles*, with particular reference to *νεός* the most frequently employed architectural term in the text.

At HT there were gardens at least one of which was situated outside the sacred enclosure, a myrtle wood, at least one cave, cisterns, and fortification walls (a double set can be inferred) protecting the *νεός*. The *νεός* seems to have been the sacred center of HT. Most of the activity at HT, as recorded in the text, occurred at the *νεός*.¹¹⁸⁶ People went to the *νεός* to receive help and to pray. There they slept in hopes of a visitation from Thekla and subsequent healing. The virgins slept within the *νεός* and the holy treasures were stored there. And one time, when Thekla's sacred treasures were threatened, there was chaos in the *νεός*. People spent time in the courtyard of the *νεός* and fed the birds that congregated there. The *νεός* faced the inner second gate.¹¹⁸⁷ There was a *stoa*¹¹⁸⁸ at the back of it. A cave was situated to the west of the *νεός* and facing it. The Myrtle Wood was a short distance from the entrance to the *νεός*.

In contrast to *νεός*, *ναός* occurs only a few times: twice in the *Life* and three times in the *Miracles*. Two of these instances are not in reference to HT. The first refers to a pagan religious building and is used in distinction from *temenos*;¹¹⁸⁹ the other, refers to Thekla's *ναός* at Aigai where a certain Isokasios, who had fallen ill, took up lodging in hope of rest.¹¹⁹⁰ In the third instance, we learn that at HT soaps were sold in front of the *ναός*.¹¹⁹¹ The term is used again in the *Life* when Ps.-Basil makes reference to Thekla's *ναός* and "city" (i.e. Hagia Thekla).¹¹⁹² Finally, *ναός* and *νεός* occur in the same passage as distinct from each other, both in the accusative singular, but there is not enough detail to provide definition for either term and, consequently, we are unable to establish the distinction between the two.¹¹⁹³

Although typically *ναός* and *νεός* are thought to be dialectical variants, they occur in the *Miracles* as distinct, each with its own declension. *Ναός* also occurs as distinct from *τέμενος* in the *Life*.¹¹⁹⁴ By extension, then, *νεός* is distinct from *τέμενος* as well.

Whether *νεός* or *ναός* might be employed in the sense of “church building” or “sanctuary” is unestablished.”¹¹⁹⁵ Dr. Hellenkemper suggests that, in the *Miracles*, *νεός* may refer to the Cave Church and the Basilica Church and their precinct while the term *ναός* may refer to a single church building such as the Basilica proper. He also notes that uncertainty in regard to terms for churches is not unique to the *Miracles* but has a wider context in that early Byzantine authors employed a variety of terms and it is not yet understood whether the terms were determined by such consideration as size, use, regional dialect, or architectural form. Dr. Haijo Westra suggests the possibility of the use of various terms simply for literary aesthetics. This is a mystery still to be solved with the answer waiting to be unearthed.

Notes to Appendix A

¹¹⁶² Evagrius, *Hist. Ecc.* III.8.

¹¹⁶³ Hild and Hellenkemper (1990) includes a survey of textual references to HT.

¹¹⁶⁴ Hill (1996), 208.

¹¹⁶⁵ As cited by Hill (1996), 208 n. 128: Herzfeld and Guyer (1930), 1-89; Forsyth (1957), 223-6; Feld (1963), 93-4; Kramer (1963), 304-7; Wilkinson (1973), 88-92; Hellenkemper (1986), 63-90; Hild, Hellenkemper, and Hellenkemper-Salies (1984) 182-356, esp. 228-39; Hild and Hellenkemper (1990) esp. 441-3, plates 383-90. See also Dagron (1978), 63-79; Cooper (1995), 11-13; Davis (2001), 37-9.

¹¹⁶⁶ *Life* 28.15-17.

¹¹⁶⁷ *Itinerarium* 23.7-10 (CCSL).

¹¹⁶⁸ *Mir.* 25.21-35.

¹¹⁶⁹ *Mir.* 22.3.

¹¹⁷⁰ Dr. Hellenkemper mentions that the road would have especially lent itself to solemn processions. The late Dr. Catherine Clark Kroeger had visited the site on more than one occasion, and related to me how she and other women walked up the highway to HT through the rock cut face accompanied by local women as they all sang hymns. Dr. Hellenkemper also notes the *χαμοσόρεια* or flat tombs of the necropolis of HT dispersed along the highway, with Christian funerary inscriptions.

¹¹⁷¹ *Mir.* 36.29-34. See Dagron (1978), 63-4.

¹¹⁷² Egeria mentions *monasteria plurima* of men and women at HT.

¹¹⁷³ Hill (1996), 212.

¹¹⁷⁴ Hild and Hellenkemper (1990), 442.

¹¹⁷⁵ Hill (1996), 215.

¹¹⁷⁶ Hill (1996), 217. *Itinerarium* 23.7-10 (CCSL).

¹¹⁷⁷ Hill (1996), 219, postulates, due to the nature of re-used materials, that the Cave Church and the fourth-century basilica may have been constructed upon the site of a previous pagan shrine.

¹¹⁷⁸ *Mir.* 10.6.

¹¹⁷⁹ Hill (1996), 217. According to Hill, the northern part of the apse collapsed in May, 1942.

¹¹⁸⁰ Hill (1996), 233. For a detailed discussion of the Cupola Church, see Hellenkemper (1986).

¹¹⁸¹ Hill (1996), 226-7.

¹¹⁸² Herzfeld and Guyer (1930), 73-4. Hill (1996), 234.

¹¹⁸³ Hill (1996), 226.

¹¹⁸⁴ Hild and Hellenkemper (1990), 442.

¹¹⁸⁵ Hill (1996), 234.

¹¹⁸⁶ *Mir.* 4.4 indicates that Zeus had a *νεός* in Seleucia which Thekla conscripted and converted to an abode (*κατ'ἀγώγιον*) for St. Paul. Thekla had not only a *νεός* at HT but also at Dalisandos, and Selinous. All three were situated on summits. The *νεός* at Selinous, like HT, had fortification walls. At Aigai, Thekla had a *ναός*.

¹¹⁸⁷ According to Dr. Hellenkemper, there is evidence of one strong gate to the Basilica Church precinct in the northern wall and he accepts the possibility of a second gate, now destroyed, in the southern wall.

¹¹⁸⁸ The *stoas* are all decayed, according to Dr. Hellenkemper, but were typically used among other purposes, for sleeping places for pilgrims and for processions.

¹¹⁸⁹ *Life* 6.38-48.

¹¹⁹⁰ *Mir.* 39.9.

¹¹⁹¹ *Mir.* 42.20-2.

¹¹⁹² *Life* 28.16-23.

¹¹⁹³ *Mir.* 28. 11-17.

¹¹⁹⁴ In regard to this distinction, in correspondence with me Dr. John Humphrey wrote, “This would be natural in classical architecture: the *temenos* is the wall that “cuts” the holy from the profane ground (hence, the sanctuary wall) while the *naos* is the inner sanctuary of the temple proper.” *Life* 15.64.6 indicates that there was at one time a *τέμενος* of Thekla at Pisidian Antioch that commemorated her martyrrial contests.

¹¹⁹⁵ Ps.-Basil does not use the word *ἐκκλησία* in the *Miracles* in a way that clearly identifies the presence of specific church buildings at HT. The word *ἐκκλησία* is used infrequently in the *L&M* and primarily in regard to the world-wide or local body of believers. In the sense of “church building”, *ἐκκλησία* occurs only a few times, twice connected to dream sequences (*Mir.* 9 and 12) and, oneiric context aside, seems to refer to an actual building but not necessarily at the site itself. At the end of *Mir.* 9, Menodoros receives property for an *ἐκκλησία* (at HT?) from the emperor. *Ἐκκλησία* occurs again in the epilogue with Ps.-Basil’s prayers that he might be restored to *τῆς ἱερᾶς ἀναβάθρας τοῦ ἱεροῦ βήματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας ταύτης* (whether a building is meant by the structural terms or whether the phrase is used idiomatically similarly to *cursus honorum* is open to interpretation). He continues in prayer that he might again be able to preach that which is customarily preached in *ἐκκλησίαις* (which could be interpreted either as a “church buildings” or the “assemblies of believers”). In that same passage, *ἐκκλησία* is used unambiguously as the “world-wide Church” when he refers to Thekla as “the most lovely first fruit of the *ἐκκλησία* after the Apostles”. A fourth occurrence of the term that may be interpreted either way, in *Mir.* 29, when Marianos, the bishop of Tarsus, is said to have stood up in his *ἐκκλησία* and “forbade and prohibited all <his congregants> from visiting” HT. All other occurrences of *ἐκκλησία* refer to either the local or world-wide body of believers and not in reference to a church building. The only occurrence of the term in the *Life* is in the context of Tryphaena’s conversion:

...they all together hurried off to the house and there was nothing <taking place> except what ends in good cheer and talk of God; so that the dining <hall> of Tryphaina was yet more an *ἐκκλησία* than a dwelling-place. For beginning her catechesis from the hearth, so to speak, the Martyr won over Tryphaena herself and not a few of the children and young-people appointed to the service of Tryphaena to the word of faith, and by the seal enlisted them for Christ. (*Life* 24. 24-6)

APPENDIX B:

JEWS IN THE *LIFE & MIRACLES OF THEKLA*

Jews are referenced only five times in the *Life & Miracles*: twice in the *Life* and three times in the *Miracles*.¹¹⁹⁶ Hild and Hellenkemper suggest that the Cilician Jews originated with the two thousand Jewish families that Antiochos III (242- 187 B.C.) resettled in Asia Minor.¹¹⁹⁷ The references in the text to the Jews are fleeting but support the archaeological record testifying to their presence at Seleucia. At the same time, Ps.-Basil's displays a latent contempt for the Jewish people despite Thekla's concern for them:

1) *Life* 1.19-20:

The godly Paul, in the beginning a Jew and a persecutor and a zealot of his ancestral law, as he himself says somewhere...

Ps.-Basil is referring to 1 Tim 1:13 where Paul says, "Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man..." in reference to his experience on the road to Damascus. The account is contained in Acts 9:1-2; Acts 26:9-11; and Acts 22:3-5.

2) *Life* 22.52

And...Paul...blinded Elymas a person proclaimed for his sorcery.

See Acts 13:4-12 that records Paul's encounter with the Jewish sorcerer Elymas at Paphos, Cyprus, shortly before Thekla became a Christian:

They [Barnabas—a Cypriot by birth—and Saul/Paul] traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul,

Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas [Bar-Jesus] the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun.” Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

3) *Miracle* introduction 94-6.

Already [Thekla] has appeared both to the Jews and to the Greeks many times and has manifested the same power to them.

4) *Miracle* 14.10-15

And so, always running off to the church of the Martyr, [the wife of Hypsistios] imitated the carriage of Hannah who is of such great fame in the Holy Scripture: her posture, her prayers, her tears, and her perseverance in her prayers and entreaties, but not for the sake of having children—the request of Jewish “vulgarity” (*ιουδαικής άπειροκαλίας*) but so that she might see her husband [become] a Christian and a believer.

Dagron sees this, and again in *Life* 8.19 as evidence of hostility towards the Jews in the *Life & Miracles*.¹¹⁹⁸

5) *Miracle* 18.22 and 29:

Aba on the other hand was still a pagan (*έλληνις*), neither loathing the Jews nor avoiding the Christians....At one time some of the Jews (*ιουδαιών*), at another time some witch doctors (*έπαιιδών*) together with the excellent Sarpedon toyed with her, promising a cure or at least doing

something but [actually] unable to do anything, and in the end they were ineffectual.

Dagron writes of the Jews from whom Aba had sought help that they are those “qui sont sans doute des médecins, mais dont les pratiques gardent une certaine connotation religieuse.”¹¹⁹⁹

Funerary inscriptions testify to a Jewish population at Seleucia and in neighbouring Olba.¹²⁰⁰ The necropolis at Seleucia was an area specifically for Jewish burial within the Christian cemetery.¹²⁰¹ Although much later, there is a fascinating extant twelfth-century letter from a very self-satisfied, Arabic-speaking Egyptian Jewish doctor residing at Seleucia to his brother-in-law in Egypt inviting him to bring his family and join him in Seleucia.¹²⁰² In the letter, he refers to a town about seventy-five miles away from Seleucia, perhaps Isaura Palai, and to the community of fifty Jewish families residing there.

Cyprus also had a significant Jewish population dating from the days of Ptolemy Philadelphus. In 115, there was a Jewish uprising in Alexandria that spread to Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia and on to Cyprus. The Jews destroyed Salamis and attacked non-Jews. According to Cassius Dio, the Jews were stopped and expelled from the island on the pain of death.¹²⁰³ Mitford questions the veracity of Dio’s report that the Jews were banished from Cyprus. Inscriptions from the fourth through seventh centuries attest their presence on the island.¹²⁰⁴ Mitford suggests, based on the complete lack of Jewish symbols in a funerary context as compared to nearby Seleucia and Corycus, that both had dedicated necropoleis for the Jews, that the Jews who survived the insurrection and stayed perhaps did so “furtively and under sufferance.”¹²⁰⁵ A later reference describes a

Jewish slave who took refuge on Cyprus having escaped his Arab masters on the mainland.¹²⁰⁶

A Jewish community at Seleucia is attested by both textual and epigraphical evidence. According to the *Miracles*, there were Jewish people engaged in some type of medical enterprise at Seleucia; there was still a Jewish medical presence in the twelfth century. There were Jews living to the south on the island of Cyprus. Barnabas, Paul's missionary companion, was a native of Cyprus and was born of a Jewish family.

The references in the *Life & Miracles* to the Jews are few but they harbour a latent hostility on the part of the author, as Dagron noted. Although Ps.-Basil does not present the Jewish people in a particularly favourable light, his is an added witness to their presence and activity in Seleucia.¹²⁰⁷

Notes to Appendix B

- ¹¹⁹⁶ *Life* 1-2; *Mir.* 1, 14, and 18.
- ¹¹⁹⁷ Hild and Hellenkemper (1990), 85.
- ¹¹⁹⁸ Dagron (1978), 156 and 327, n. 4.
- ¹¹⁹⁹ Dagron (1978), 93. Also see Dagron (1978), 124, n.2 who, on the reputation of Jewish doctors, cites Canon 11 of the Council of Trullo (692) in Rallès and Potlès (1868), 328-330.
- ¹²⁰⁰ See Dagron (1978), 93, n. 5 for a list of citations for inscriptions.
- ¹²⁰¹ As cited by Mitford (1990b), 2205 and n. 158; *MAMA* III, 18, n. 32.
- ¹²⁰² Goitein (1964), 298-303.
- ¹²⁰³ Cass. Dio 68.32.3; Euseb. *Chron.* 2.164
- ¹²⁰⁴ See Mitford (1980b), 1380 and notes.
- ¹²⁰⁵ Mitford (1980b), 1381.
- ¹²⁰⁶ In Kingsley and Decker (2001), 121, n.6; Flusin (1991), 386 and 391.
- ¹²⁰⁷ By the eighth century at the latest there was also a thriving Jewish community at the relatively nearby town of Strobilos on the Carian coast. It was situated on a steep conical hill that was in later days known as “the Jews’ castle.” Strobilos served as a fortress and naval station. The town never grew large enough to be granted a bishop. In 1153, a novel issued by Manuel Commenus ordered real estate returned to the church that had been confiscated by the government. At the end of the novel there is an interesting reference to the Jews: “The Strobiliote Jews who are found everywhere and exemption for ships with a capacity of 30,000.” It appears that although Strobilos was not a large town, it had a large and successful Jewish community; what its relation to the Jewish community at Seleucia was, however, is open only to conjecture. For more on Strobilos and its Jewish community, see Foss ([1988] 1990), 147-74.

APPENDIX C:
MOSAICS IN THE *MIRACLES*

This appendix, as does Appendix A, presents information from the *Miracles* that scholars in other fields such as archaeology, by correlating text with space, may find useful in their own research. The excavated text may well have application to the excavated site.

Herzfeld and Guyer's archaeological report of Hagia Thekla includes findings of a mosaic pavement at the *temenos* so large that it intersects the wall of a corridor.¹²⁰⁸ The *Miracles* twice make reference to mosaics at Hagia Thekla. *Miracle* 10 relates the episode in which Symposios, while he was still an Arian bishop, ordered a certain man to chip away from the wall of the *temenos* a "divine inscription" made of "fine gold *tesserae* (*ψηφοι*)."¹²⁰⁹ The inscription testified to the consubstantiality of the Trinity and was protected by Thekla's "pure, undefiled, and immaculate hand." The project was brought suddenly to an end when the workman's feet were badly crushed when he fell from his ladder. Bishop Symposios was so disturbed by the incident that he denounced Arianism and embraced orthodoxy. The inscription remained unharmed.

The *ψηφοι* are described as "fine." Examination has shown that the mosaics at Antioch tended to be finer in the fourth century than in the latter part of the fifth or early part of the sixth with more *tesserae* per area.¹²¹⁰ The finer *tesserae* do not necessarily reflect dating, according to Rica, but can rather be indicative of the quality of the workmanship or even the financial and social status of the patron.

It seems a very skilled craftsman named Leontios spent time at Hagia Thekla adorning it with marble and mosaics:

If we fail to mention Leontios and the miracle concerning him, I think that we shall be committing an impious deed, committed by us who still feast our eyes on the marvels of his art throughout the holy sanctuary; for indeed the arrangement of the marble plaques interspersed around the walls and the variegated beauty of the pavement that little by little converges into one are the work and labor of his hands. Now this man [Leontius] also designed and executed a similar creation in a house of one of the wealthy people at Antioch...¹²¹¹

According to this account, Leontios' mosaic work in a private home in Antioch was similar to that which he had designed and executed at Hagia Thekla. The mosaics of Antioch are well-known. Apart from the floors of its churches, only one floor in Antioch displays a Christian motif. The work at Antioch was halted when the scaffolding upon which the craftsmen were standing broke. Leontios' legs were shattered and he returned to Hagia Thekla to seek healing. His Antiochene patron, though concerned about Leontios' well-being, was skeptical as to the means of healing that he had chosen. When Leontios returned to his work in Antioch, healed and rejoicing, his patron embraced the Christian faith. Whether he would have chosen at that time to add any Christian symbol to the work in his home is pure conjecture.

There may be a link between the mosaics at Antioch and the *Miracles* themselves. In another section, I have noted that Ps.-Basil employs a literary flourish in *Mir.* 37 in attributing gratefulness to the Arts. That notion is known to have been expressed only in one other place—in the title page dedicated to Anicia Juliana in the illustrated manuscript of the *Vienna Dioscorides* (c. 512). In the picture “Thankfulness of the Arts” is

personified along with Generosity (*Μεγαλοψυχία*) holding a basket of coins and Prudence (*Φρόνησις*). The only other known representation of *Megalopsychia*¹²¹² is in a mosaic floor in the Yakto complex at Antioch, which is thought to have been a large villa (from c. 450-526 for construction and reconstructions).¹²¹³ A *terminus post quem* of the mid-fifth century for the mosaic is felicitously provided by an inscription “Arbadurius” in its topographical border. Arbadurius’ house is represented in the mosaic. Arbadurius, whose headquarters was at Antioch, was *magister militum per Orientem* from 450 to 457. An account by Evagrius confirms Arbadurius’ presence in Antioch still in 459.¹²¹⁴ Anicia Juliana also is known to have had ties to Arbadurius and to Antioch. She was married to the nephew of Arbadurius. Levi advances the provisional link between the mosaic and the Vienna Dioscorides.¹²¹⁵ In both, *Megalopsychia* holds a basket of from which coins are spilling forth. In the mosaic, her hand is raised in the same gesture as is that of Anicia Juliana’s in the Dioscorides. According to Levi, it is a gesture difficult to render, and usually associated with imperial largesse. The *Miracles*, the mosaic, and the manuscript are roughly contemporary. Might these three be linked through Leontios?

This would not be the first case in which mosaics were linked to a text. There is precedent for it in the Emperor Zeno’s *Henotikon* and the paradise themes of several mosaic floors in southern Asia Minor and Syria.¹²¹⁶ At the Martyrium of Seleucia (c. 500) at Antioch, the Paradise theme is represented in a mosaic floor but without a central figure such as Christ the Good Shepherd or Orpheus, as is often the case elsewhere. Herzfeld and Guyer published a *paradeisos* mosaic of a Corycian church that includes the passage from Isaiah 11.67 about the lion laying down with the lamb.¹²¹⁷ A less finely rendered version of the theme is found on a floor at Ayas of Cilicia.¹²¹⁸ Hunting scenes

and animals become more frequent in the floor mosaics in this later period. It has been suggested that the profusion of the paradise theme is connected to the Emperor Zeno's *Henotikon* which sounded a call for peace and unity in the greater church.

These considerations are beyond the scope of this study and must be left to those knowledgeable in the field. The research of Herzfeld and Guyer at Hagia Thekla may also yield valuable insights.

Ps.-Basil's deep appreciation of the mosaic and marble work at Hagia Thekla may be similar to that which Gregory of Nyssa expressed in an *ekphrasis* describing the shrine of St. Theodore in Euchaita of Pontus in which he "praises the structure's magnificent aesthetic qualities" likening them to a "visual prayer:"

The elaborate mosaic floor that is like a prayer in tiny stones to the martyr, polished stones that are as smooth as silver. (PG 46.741.16-18)¹²¹⁹

By extension, the paradise mosaics could be regarded as prayers for peace.

Notes to Appendix C

¹²⁰⁸ As cited by Dagron (1978), 62.

¹²⁰⁹ *Ψήφος* refers to a small round pebble or precious gem. I have rendered it as *tessera*.

¹²¹⁰ Rice (1958), 150.

¹²¹¹ *Mir.* 17.1-9. Dagron (1978), 158 regards this passage as an *ekphrasis*.

¹²¹² For a detailed description of the Megalapsychia bust in the mosaic, see Levi (1947), 338 ff. Also see Levi, vol 2. Plate LXXVI.

¹²¹³ For description of the Yakto complex, see Levi (1947), 279-83, 323

¹²¹⁴ *Evag. Schol. Hist. Eccl.* I.13. According to Evagrius' account, at this time Arbadurius maintained the peace when the relics of St. Symeon the Stylite were translated into Antioch. For more on Abadurius, see Levi (1947), 279, 323 and notes.

¹²¹⁵ Levi (1947), 339, n. 102.

¹²¹⁶ See Hill (1996) 154 and 195. Hill postulates a link between the paradise mosaics at Dag Pazari and the bird sanctuary at HT and the "reconciliatory *Henotikon*" of Zeno and writes:

This may well be more than merely accidental, and, given Zeno's undoubted involvement with the sanctuary at the Meryemlik, it may not be illogical to suggest that the bird mosaic here, and others like it, have as strong a flavour of the late fifth century as that proposed by Gough for the paradise mosaics which contain quotations from Isaiah, and which Gough wished to relate to the publication of Zeno's *Henotikon* in 482 (Gough 1972, 210-12).

This same imagery is found in a fifth-/sixth-century church at Anemurium in Rough Cilicia. See Sheila Campbell (1989) *The Mosaics of Anemurium*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies.

¹²¹⁷ Herzfeld and Guyer (1930), 106-7 and Pl. 104.5.

¹²¹⁸ See Gough (1954), 57.

¹²¹⁹ As quoted by Limberis (2006), 42. Limberis provides a rather free but poetic translation of the actual Greek text.